DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 215 IR 051 595

AUTHOR	Moss, William W.; Mazikana, Peter C.
TITLE	Archives, Oral History and Oral Tradition: A RAMP Study.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). General Information Programme.
REPORT NO	PGI-86/WS/2
PUB DATE	Jan 86
NOTE	109p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Archives; Audiotape Recordings; Developed Nations; *Developing Nations; Historiography; *Oral History; Primary Sources; Production Techniques; Program Descriptions; Social History; Speech Communication; Surveys

ABSTRACT

This Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP) report provides information on the nature of oral tradition/history; the role of recorded oral history as documentation in the absence of written records, or as a supplement where written records exist; problems in recording and administering such materials; and basic considerations involved in their use. The study is intended for archivists, curators, historical administrators, and other information specialists, and its conclusions are based upon the experience of professional programs in various parts of the world, including developing countries. The report includes the following sections: (1) Introduction: Oral Tradition and Oral History; (2) The Historiographic Context of Oral History and Oral Tradition; (3) The History of Oral History and Oral Tradition; (4) The Varieties of Oral History and Oral Tradition; (5) Recording Oral History and Oral Tradition; (6) Equipment and Technology; (7) Archival Management of the Record; (8) Finding Aids and Access; (9) Ethical and Legal Issues; (10) Uses of Oral History and Oral Tradition; (11) Survey of Archives and Oral Tradition; (12) Guidelines for Oral History; and (13) a 50-item bibliography. (THC)

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Archives, oral history and oral tradition: a RAMP study

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United Nations Educational
Scientific and Cultural Organization

Paris, 1986

IR051595

Original: English

PGI-86/WS/2
Paris, January 1986

ARCHIVES, ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION:

A RAMP STUDY

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United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Recommended catalogue entry :

Moss, William W. -
Archives, oral history and oral tradition : a RAMP Study / prepared by William W. Moss and Peter C. Mazikana /for the/ General Information Programme and UNISIST. - Paris : Unesco, 1986. - iii, 97 p.; 30 cm. - (PGI-86/WS/2).

I - Mazikana, Peter C.

II - Title

III - Unesco.General Information Programme and UNISIST

IV - Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP)

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P R E F A C E

The Division for the General Information Programme of Unesco, in order to better meet the needs of Member States, particularly developing countries, in the specialized areas of records management and archives administration, has developed a long-term Records and Archives Management Programme: RAMP.

1. Promote the formulation of information policies and plans (national, regional and international)

2. Promote and disseminate methods, norms and standards for information handling

3. Contribute to the development of information infrastructures

4. Contribute to the development of specialized information systems in the fields of education, culture and communication, and the natural and social sciences

5. Promote the training and education of specialists in and users of information

The present work, prepared under contract with the International Council on Archives (ICA), is intended to make available information on the nature of oral tradition/history; its role, once recorded, as documentation in the absence of or in supplementing written records; problems in recording and administering such materials; and basic considerations involved in their use. The Study is intended for archivists, curators, historical administrators and other information specialists, and the guidelines with which it concludes are based upon the experience of sound professional programmes in various parts of the world, including developing countries.

Comments and suggestions regarding this Study are welcomed and should be addressed to the Division of the General Information Programme, UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris. Other studies prepared under the RAMP programme may also be obtained at the same address.

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0 INTRODUCTION: ORAL TRADITION AND ORAL HISTORY

The post-Second World War period has brought about a significant expansion in the functions and responsibilities of archival institutions and the archivists who manage them. Against a background of stagnant or diminishing resources, archivists have been called upon to accommodate increasingly large volumes of records, to adapt traditional archival practices and principles to new sources of information and record media, and to cope with rapid technological advances in communications and recordkeeping devices.

The customary archival role of the custodian or keeper of local, state, and central government records has had to be modified and transformed in many ways. This transformation has not been easy, as may be shown by the continuing controversy over the degree of involvement by archivists in the management of current and semi-current records. Archivists in different countries have responded in different ways to the challenges that have arisen. It is not surprising, therefore, that oral tradition and oral history have not received the universal welcome they deserve as legitimate archival endeavors.

There is nothing new in the recording, use, and preservation of oral tradition and oral history. Indeed, individuals and institutions have collected, used, and preserved oral sources and have made those materials available to researchers for years. To a large extent, however, this has been done by university departments, specialized research institutions, or archival units set up specifically to deal with oral sources or sound recordings. For archival institutions at the local, state, and national levels, the novelty lies in the extent to which they are being asked to accept the role of custodians and administrators of this material and the extent to which they are even being asked to assume the entirely unfamiliar and often uncomfortable role of participation in the creation of these records. Whatever the pros and cons of such involvement, there is little doubt that oral tradition and oral history have had and will continue to have increasingly significant impact on archival work, and archivists must be prepared to accommodate and master this material. To do so, however, they must have as full and precise an understanding of oral history and oral tradition as they have of other more familiar archival sources.

Oral tradition and oral history share a common oral nature. While it is deceptively easy to propose distinctions between them, it is more difficult to sustain the differences in practice. There is often much similarity in the ways they are collected, processed, stored, and made available to researchers and in the equipment required to record and preserve these materials. In

common practice, both those who concentrate on oral history and those who work with oral tradition belong to a common class of oral historians and share many of the same interests, concerns, and objectives, methods and procedures.

Oral traditions are those recollections of the past, orally transmitted and recounted, that arise naturally within and from the dynamics of a culture. They are shared widely throughout the culture by word of mouth even though they may be entrusted to particular people for safekeeping, transmittal, recitation, and narration. They are organic expressions of the identity, purpose, functions, customs, and generational continuity of the culture in which they occur. They happen spontaneously as phenomena of cultural expression. They would exist, and indeed they have existed in the absence of written notes or other more sophisticated recording devices. They are not direct experiences of the narrators, and they must be transmitted by word of mouth to qualify as oral tradition.

Oral history, on the other hand, is usually identified as an activity, a detached and academic process of inquiry into the memories of people who have experienced the recent past directly. This inquiry and the responses it generates are recorded to supplement written records that have been found wanting in some measure for historical analysis. It is a studied, abstract, and anlytic practice of historians and other social scientists, and it relies heavily on a recording device, whether manual, mechanical, or electronic.

Oral history owes much to the traditions of Western European historiography. It was developed partly to remedy deficiencies in written records, but it has been viewed by many traditional historians as an undisciplined, rebellious, and perhaps even irresponsible child of documentary history. Rebellious or not, oral history necessarily presumes an existing context of written records, from which prior research identifies major lacunae that may be filled through the recording of testimony by participants and witnesses to the events in question. The product of oral history is subject to textual criticism and content analysis by the same standards that are applied by historians to written documents.

Although oral traditions may be collected as an academic exercise and subsumed under the general umbrella of oral history, in their very nature they have an inherent additional social value in contributing to the social cohesion, dynamic evolution, and durability of the culture they represent. Oral traditions are therefore changed in the very act of recording from dynamic and developing or evolving self-consciousness into fixed and static "snapshots" of the culture at one point in its development. They become abstracted from the process that creates and nurtures them, and in this they necessarily become outdated very rapidly.

Oral traditions are to a large extent identified with societies lacking a written tradition, but they also exist in highly literate societies, even those with impressive archives of written records. Their most important archival function, however, has been in documenting those societies without written records, throwing light on the historical, social, economic, and cultural development of such societies. In many cases it has been the only way in which the past of a society could be reconstructed and recorded in written form for archival preservation.

Oral history became necessary, at least in part, because many historians came to believe that written records were excessively limited to the documentation of a ruling government or elite class, or to a dominant national function such as religion or law. Thus, much social history went unrecorded or was recorded incidental to other purposes which diminished the usefulness of the record for social history. Whole classes of people were poorly represented in great national annals, and the perspective reflected in those annals tended to be highly legalistic, formal, and bureaucratic. Modern historians are seeking to remedy this deficiency in a variety of ways, among them the collection of oral history and oral tradition. Modern institutions, whether commercial, governmental, religious, or social, have come to discover a need for documentating and sharing information beyond the strict confines of records of official transactions. Furthermore, oral history, even at its most studied and academic levels, has begun to discover the importance and use of mythology to rationalize even the most highly sophisticated and deterministic activities of a modern technological society. As in the case of oral traditions, the relationship of a traditional perspective to the social dynamic may be as significant as the evidential value of the contents of oral history for documentation of historical phenomena.

Archives require durable records removed from the direct effect of continuing social development. Archivists must understand that in acquiring oral sources they are participating in a process of transformation from socially dynamic and evolving sources to static and durable records of segments of that process. For the archivist, the distinctions between oral tradition and oral history are important primarily in understanding the provenance of each, and perhaps in developing appraisal criteria for deciding the durability of the value of each for evidential, administrative, or general information needs. The forms in which the archivist encounters them are often remarkably similar, and the distinctions between them are often unimportant in archival management of the physical property of the records once created and deposited in the archives. Handwritten or typed notes and transcripts, magnetic audiotapes, sound motion picture films,

and videotapes all may contain oral source records, but the most common for both oral tradition and oral history is magnetic audiotape, often but not necessarily accompanied by a written transcript or schedule of contents of the tape. Each form may record one, two, or several participants, although multiple participants beyond the inquirer-respondent dialogue form in oral history are less common. The inquirer or collector role in recordings of oral tradition is commonly much more reserved, obscure, and self-effacing than in the oral history interview, where the interviewer must act as a catalyst to prompt and challenge the memory of the narrator.

It is crucially important, however, for both oral history and for oral tradition, that the archivist understand that what is given to the archives is a record of an interview or the record of a recounting of an oral tradition; it is not a record of or from the past about which the subject speaks, although it may be an attempt to define or recreate that past. It is a record of an event (an interview, a story-telling, the recitation of an epic poem, etc.) that took place in the recent past, not a surviving relic of that more distant past of which the narrator speaks, even if the information supplied is the only surviving evidence of that past known to exist.

1.0 THE HISTORIOGRAPHIC CONTEXT OF ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION[1]

To understand their proper place in the system of historical analysis, we must examine oral history and oral tradition in relation to other kinds of historical evidence. For purposes of this thesis, it is suggested that we may identify five types or levels of source materials that go into the writing of history: transactional records; selective records; recollections; reflections; and the analyses and conclusions of one's predecessors.

From the usual meanings of these five terms we can recognize an ascending scale of sophistication and abstraction. There is also a counter-scale of evidential value. As abstraction increases and we get further away from the immediate reality, the evidential value of the information decreases. The simple thesis that evidence and abstraction are in inverse relation to one another is often forgotten because it is so elementary, and perhaps because many debates about historical validity turn too quickly to an epistemological search for "truth." But, this relationship is not only useful to an understanding of the value of oral history and oral tradition in a historiographic context, it is crucial to that understanding.

The historian is engaged in the task of mastering the past. The discipline of history is a means by which we may avoid deceiving ourselves about what has happened. We may not succeed, but history offers us the chance. It is axiomatic that such discipline is essential to coping with the present and planning for the future.

If oral history and oral tradition are to be employed in the service of history to master the past, then there must be systematic means of relating evidential and abstract values and distinguishing them from one another in oral history and oral tradition. An examination of the five levels of sources is needed to achieve this understanding.

1.1 Transactional Records

Transactional records are produced to further the ongoing business of an organization, not for the benefit of historians, who are served only incidentally by their creation and preservation and availability. Transactional records are not so much abstractions of actions as they are the actions themselves. They may be abstract in the sense that they are symbolic representations of agreements or communications, but the documents produced are themselves the transactions as well as their records. Any document that embodies in its text the sum and substance of the action it represents is a transactional record. It is the authoritative basis for actions arising

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1/ Part of this section is excerpted and slightly revised by the author, with the permission of the Society of American Archivists, from an article, "Oral History: An Appreciation," by William W. Moss, in The American Archivist, vol. 40, no. 4, October 1977.

from or dependent on the transaction. Constitutions, laws, contracts, deeds, treaties, diplomas, certificates, licenses, patents, proclamations, orders, instructions, advertisements, and other similar documents are all transactional records. They are primary evidence. An order never obeyed and an advertisement never responded to are nevertheless actions that occurred. Unless the documents are forged, we may accept them at face value, as primary evidence. There is no interpretive or selective process between the document and the reality it represents beyond that inherent to the transaction itself and to the document's survival over time. No interpretive element intrudes between the document and the observer other than the observer's own bias and perception.

Given the foregoing definition, the question has been raised whether or not a letter written from one person to another is a transactional record. It is a record of the transaction of letter writing; but, that does not mean that its content information is indisputable as evidence of what it reports.

1.2 Selective Records

Selective records are attempts to preserve and to communicate to others descriptions of what is happening at a given time. Concurrency is important in order to distinguish this level of evidence from recollections, which are discussed below. Audio, video, or cinematic recordings of actions and events as they unfold, stenographic notes of conversations as they are taking place, still photographs, and even recorded running descriptions (such as that of a sports broadcaster on the radio) may be included in the category of selective records. They are selective in that there is a selective or interpretive device or process between the reality and the record produced to represent the reality. The stenographer or broadcaster must describe selectively because not everything can be described exhaustively. Even the mechanical, photographic, or electronic recording device (although an improvement in immediacy and comprehensive description over verbal characterisations) can record only so much as its technical range and capacity will permit. Some interpretation through selection or transmission is unavoidable and inevitable.

Recordings of oral history interviews and oral tradition narrations are therefore selective records of those events.

Selective records are highly valued as historical evidence for their contemporary character, but their evidential value must always be somewhat less than that of transactional records. The very interpretive nature of the selective class of records, however, produces commensurate abstract value for the historian. Selective records are, after all, primary evidence of what someone decided to record or was capable of recording. If we further suppose that

such recordings are generally more deliberate and purposeful than whimsical or random, then we may infer some contemporary value to the interpretation or selection that is recorded. The record is what someone contemporary to the events believed to be important enough to record and preserve. The first step from primary evidence and into abstraction has been taken. Selective records are abstracts of the reality they purport to represent.

1.3 Recollections

If the human memory is a selective record, then recollections from that memory are still further selective, and selection is compounded to a second degree. It might be fairer to divide recollections into those emerging soon after the events recalled and those emerging later, but the distinction is one of degree rather than kind, and it begs the question of where to draw the line between sooner and later. While this may be very important to a historian evaluating the content information, it is not essential to the present thesis. In the category of recollections we may place any accounts that are first-hand and yet are not concurrent to the subject or event that is described. Recollections include diaries, letters written at evening to recount the events of the day, information solicited from eyewitnesses by investigators, tales told by grandfathers to little children about the days of their youth, and information supplied by oral history narrators.

Recollections are clearly another step away from reality into abstraction. As evidence they must be considered less reliable than either transactional records or selective records. They may perhaps be all that a historian has and therefore a *sine qua non* to his research; but, this value must not be confused with the relative evidential value. Because it is the only evidence available does not mean we may rely on it with the same degree of confidence we would give to a transactional record or a selective record. The distinction is an important one in terms of mastering the past, and the values are far too often confused in practice.

Several factors contribute to the decreased evidential value of recollections compared to transactional or selective records. Recollections may, and often do include secondhand accounts and hearsay, or will at least be colored by the impact of such information on the witness or narrator recounting a description from memory. Furthermore, intervening events in the experience of the witness/narrator, or his prior receptivity to certain ideas and not to others, may induce him to diminish the importance of some of the evidence in his memory, and to enhance the importance of other evidence. We also have in the process of recollection an intrusion of purposes that may affect the quality of the evidence proffered: to inform a group; to secure one's own dignified position in history; to instruct a grandchild; to take revenge on a foe; or even to enhance the value of a collection in a library or archival institution. All are purposes that may overtly

or subtly affect the character and nature of the evidence presented.

Historians must be careful about using recollections as evidence. They must understand that a recollection is itself a complex piece of evidence. Three levels are involved: the initial event or reality; the memory which is a selective record at least one step removed from reality; and the further selective and interpretive account recalled from memory by the witness/narrator. Furthermore, when an interviewer deliberately questions a person to solicit information as evidence, a fourth level of selection, interpretation, and potential for distortion or intrusion enters the process. The questions that an interviewer asks and the apparent purposes of his inquiry have a direct effect on what may be called up from memory and how it may be presented for recording.

Crucial to a firm understanding of oral history and oral tradition is that the record produced should never be confused with the original events, nor even with the underlying memories of those events. The record of an interview is itself a selective process that takes information from the selective recollections from the witness/narrator's memory. Whatever other values oral history and oral tradition may have for journalists, novelists, dramatists, educators, and propagandists (and these values may be many), the historian must understand and respect the evidential limitations of recollections if he is to use them honestly in his disciplined attempt to master the past.

Yet, as we move further from reality, recollections provide the historian with a corresponding abstraction of fascinating richness. We may infer from what is recalled just what it is that contemporary people believe to be significant and to recount about the past. One of the historian's tasks is to assess the importance of past events in terms of subsequent developments. The selective recollections of others may contribute insight and understanding to this task. Even when erroneous, misguided, or deliberately misleading, recollections may in their very errors provoke understanding and insight to the careful historian. Furthermore, the aggregate recollections of many people can provide a rough means of approximating historical accuracy where no transactional or contemporary selective records survive or where they are deficient. But, it requires many accounts from a good representative sample of witnesses to endow this kind of evidence with a reliability approaching that of transactional or selective records.

1.4 Reflections

It is necessary to distinguish reflections from both recollections and analysis, even though they may be inextricably mixed with either or both in the same record. Reflections go beyond simple recollections of facts in that they are what an

individual person thinks spontaneously about the past, the values and affective impressions with which he characterizes the past and makes it relevant to his own present situation. Although deliberate, reflections are highly subjective and emotional, and they are not usually characterised by the thorough and systematic weighing of evidence that is required by historical analysis.

Reflections are usually recorded along with recollections in a diary or in an oral history interview; but, like recollections, they must not be confused with the past on which they focus. A reflection is a present event of contemplating and evaluating the past, but it is not to be confused with the past which is the subject of evaluation. The historian uses reflections with the same caution that he uses recollections, as clues to the significance and meaning that past events have for people in the present, or at the time of the recording of the interview or narration. Reflections are hardly to be classed as evidence about the past at all, and thus they must be separated from recollections as a level of historical evidence. They may certainly provoke insight and understanding, and they may do so more directly than recollections; but, the significance attributed to past events in reflections does not mean that the events necessarily had that particular importance when they occurred, nor does it necessarily mean that they ought to have such meaning for us now or in the future. Reflections are useful to analysis as a record of what people thought about the past, and they may be used as a basis for inferences about the significance of events, but not as evidence for their occurrence. As with recollections, isolated reflections make poor foundations for analysis, and an aggregate of many concurring views is needed before a historian may rely on an interpretation with any degree of confidence.

1.5 Analyses and Reconstructions

Analysis is that process by which form and order are brought to the mass of evidence about the past, to bring meaning and understanding not only to the individual historian but to many people with differing views of reality. Reconstructions are the forms chosen by historians to communicate conclusions and reconstructions of history and its meaning to others, and they rest upon and are produced by the process of analysis.

Analysis requires a rigorous accounting of all the known evidence, of all levels and kinds available to the historian. It requires the making of hypotheses about how and why things happened as they appear to have happened, and why they occurred in the sequences they did. Analysis may be good or bad, strong or weak, honest or biased, depending on how good the evidence is, whether or not all available evidence has been taken into account, whether or not all reasonable hypotheses have been tested

against the evidence, and whether or not the analyst's own private interests intrude unfairly to distort the evidence and conclusions. Obviously, the historian has limitations and cannot in any given work or perhaps even in the work of a conscientious lifetime include everything that may have any possible degree of pertinence. Some selection and omission on the basis of thorough research and informed judgment is essential, or no histories would be written. But, analysis goes far beyond the simple collection, preservation and retrieval of information. It goes beyond mere description of events, people, places and things. Nor is analysis merely repetition or aggregation of notions that have occurred to others about what might be personally or universally significant about the past. Analysis requires the comparing and testing of different records against each other, weighing the relative values of insight and evidence that they contribute in fair proportion, selecting the more pertinent and discarding the less useful, forming theoretical structures from the information (both evidence and insight), synthesizing data into generalizations, and then testing new hypotheses against the evidence again and again until a surviving thesis can withstand severe critical examination.

Analysis is performed not only by historians but also by journalists, writers of government reports, political scientists, anthropologists, and other researchers and users of information from archives and from the world at large. Analysis inevitably has a limited perspective based on the purposes for which it was performed and the subjective interests of those performing the analysis. But, it can be fair and honest if all known evidence is accounted for in the process, and if the interests of the analysis are clearly made known. It is true that analysis has been and will continue to be used to serve particular ideologies, but enhancing or suppressing particular bits of evidence to further and to serve such purposes is inimical to the "mastery of the past" that history requires, and contributes to deception about the past rather than clarification. The stronger the analysis and the more it rests on comprehensive accounting of the evidence and on balanced evaluation and insight, including that from oral history and oral tradition, the more reliable and enduring the interpretation and mastery of the past it may produce in reconstructions or written histories.

1.6 The Place of Oral History

Oral history has a proper place in the system of evidence, experience, and analysis that produces reliable history. Properly used, it can make important contributions. Improperly used, it can be mischievous and destructive to mastery of the past. Oral history, to be effective, must be grounded in sound analysis and a thorough knowledge and understanding of other available and pertinent sources. Only then can it produce reliable records for the use of future research. Reliable oral history grows out of the study of existing transactional and selective records and from existing analyses and

histories, and it uses those to prepare disciplined inquiry that will provoke useful, illuminating, and reliable recollections and reflections from those interviewed, so that they may be recorded and preserved in archives for the use of others.

1.7 The Place of Oral Tradition

The value of oral tradition as a historical source can only be appreciated if its relationship to other historical evidence is clarified. Within the above proposed five-tier categorization of levels of material that go into writing history, oral tradition may be seen as falling within the second category of selective records and as a later transformation of personal recollections. As already noted, these are a highly valued source of historical evidence, but their evidential value is less than that of transactional records or contemporary selective records. The selective nature of oral traditions lies in the ways they are created, transmitted, and recited or narrated. While they must be considered among significant historical sources, the view expressed succinctly by Thomas Spear must be taken into account.

> Traditions are not even documents, not even real ones, they are history, the product of oral historians' attempts to make sense of the past. Trying to write history from them is thus equivalent to attempting to write our history from the secondary accounts of historians who have already sifted through the debris of the past, selected from it the items they deem important and decided their significance, while ignoring the rest./1

Oral traditions are not static, nor are they handed down from generation to generation in word-perfect form. Each retelling of a tradition is a separate composition in which the tradition is recreated anew around the received core or skeleton. Contrary to earlier opinion, oral traditions while communally derived also have an individual authorship and originality. It is an individuality that is related to the narrator's own inventiveness and mood, to the occasion as well as to the audience. There is continual regeneration of traditions as they are adapted to express the existing collective conscience and as the words of the past become congruent with the values and images of the present and take on contemporary meanings. It is this characteristic that places oral tradition astride several rather than firmly in one class or another in the foregoing analysis.

1/ Thomas Spear, "Oral Traditions: Whose History?" from History in Africa, vol. 8, 1981. [Note that Spear uses the term "oral historian" to identify the person who keeps and recalls the tradition. It is also used to identify the person who collects oral traditions by recording them, or who conducts oral history inquiries to record recollections and reflections of the recent past.]

Inherent in the changing nature of traditions is the difficulty of trying to ascertain the original form of a tradition. Indeed, while haste has been urged in the collection of oral traditions, there are those who argue that it is a waste of energy and resources to expect to collect traditions that are not polluted by new forms and that can be captured within their more original framework. There is no denying, however, that the pace of modernisation and political change has affected the preservation and transmission of oral traditions. Some traditions which, for instance, were preserved for their political functions, have ceased to exist with the dismantling of the political system that necessitated their existence. The point is that traditions must be assessed for value as historical sources against a background of a thorough understanding of their nature. While oral traditions are forever changing, methodologies have been developed to trace and analyse this changing process.

Oral traditions are similar to other sources of historical evidence insofar as they exist and therefore have to be consulted. Like all other sources of historical evidence, this consultation does not imply usage, it merely requires that they be taken into account. When used, they must like all other historical sources be used critically. Those who use oral traditions must also be conversant with the oral tradition methodologies that have been established to assist in their exploitation. Oral traditions fall very much in the range of sources available for historical study. They are, however, sources that are not very easy to use, and they require much skill for reliable use. They also require a knowledge of the society in which they were created, the purposes for their existence, the manner of transmission and preservation, and the circumstances of their narration or recitation.

1.8 General Conclusion

Just as a curator of medieval muniments must have a thorough grounding in paleography, sphragistics, and diplomatics, so too must an archivist charged with custody of oral history and oral tradition materials steep himself in knowledge of their nature, of the various mechanisms available for testing their validity, authenticity, and reliability, and of the uses to which they may be put by researchers. Only then can appraisal, arrangement, description, and reference service be carried out properly and effectively on such material.

2.0 THE HISTORY OF ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

2.1 Oral History

Oral historians are fond of seeking and finding the source of their craft in ancient historians. In the Zhou Dynasty (1122-221 BC) in China, officers of the court were appointed to go out among the people and to collect their sayings for the information of the emperor and court historians. Somewhat more recently, Herodatus and Thucydides relied on eyewitness accounts for narrative histories. Oral historians find some comfort and kinship with these ancient classical historians. There have also been earnest efforts to discover generic uses of the term "oral history" in earlier times. 1/ Oral historians share with all people a basic need for roots and a sense of evolutionary development as part of identity and self-definition. But they also seek legitimacy in an academic world that has been and sometimes continues to be uncharitably suspicious of the value of oral history compared to the solid and immutable evidence of documentary relics.

As Paul Thompson in England has so ably demonstrated, certain 18th and 19th century European historians such as Voltaire and Michelet did not limit their researches to traditional written documents of state and official archives. Both relied heavily on narrative recollections and reflections of eyewitnesses at court and among the general public. 2/ Moreover, every generation in every land has produced its share of regret that more of the lives and experiences of participants in great events were not more often and more extensively committed to the written record for the benefit of future generations. We may assume that oral history, or something very much like it, has roots in basic human needs as well as in utility for historians and archivists. It must also be evident, from our 20th century perspective, that the rising tide of democratic revolutions throughout the world also encouraged the emergence and attractiveness of a form of popular history singularly capable of redressing the neglect of certain portions of society when legalistic and bureaucratic concerns favoring government and religion dominated official archives.

Nevertheless, in the 18th and 19th centuries there grew up, particularly in Europe, a strong school of documentary and scientific history, grounded in Newtonian science and reacting to another tradition of literary history and official propaganda

1/ See Louis Starr, "Oral History," in Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences, (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1977), vol. 20, pp. 440-463; also Charles T. Morrissey, "Why Call It 'Oral History?' - Searching for Early Use of a Generic Term," in The Oral History Review, (Oral History Association [U.S.], 1980), pp. 20-48; and Paul Thompson, "Britain Strikes Back: Two Hundred Years of 'Oral History,'" in Oral History Association Newsletter (U.S.), (Summer, 1981), vol. XV, no. 3, pp. 4-5.

2/ Thompson, Paul. The Voice of the Past: Oral History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978. 257 pp.

that had often proved fanciful, self-serving, and therefore unreliable. A number of European historians, among them notably Leopold von Ranke and Charles Seignobos, insisted on limiting the proper practice of history to rigorous reliance on the relatively "hard" evidence found in documents and on critical analysis of their form and content. Opinions might shift and change with time, and the memories of men might play them false, but written records of past transactions, preserved from tampering in archives, would not change. Their reliability should be unimpeachable. In such an atmosphere memory is suspect and is seen as subject to both intentional and unintentional distortion. This suspicion continues to haunt oral history, particularly among those historians still loyal to the von Ranke school. Despite the work of Voltaire and Michelet, despite the persistent reliance of historians on written diaries and personal memoirs, and despite some venturesome collecting of "old-timer tales" and "life histories" of ordinary people, both the literary tradition and the documentary tradition dominated academic history well into the 20th century. Oral history has only begun to command a substantial following in the latter half of the 20th century, and three major factors are responsible for this development.

One factor is the political and economic evolutions and revolutions of the several societies throughout the world that have produced a growing popularization of government and participation by broader masses of people in every aspect of modern life, from production and commerce to government and scholarship. Beginning with the European Renaissance and given great impetus by the political, social, economic, and technological revolutions of the last two hundred years, this great change in human perspective means that not only government but history itself is not the particular property of narrow ruling elites. To be sure, control of information has become an objective of contending political forces, but the sharing of that information is broader and the hold that one group can fasten upon it is less secure than in earlier times. In a world of widespread literacy and information sharing, history can no longer be the exclusive property of church, state, or even the academic historians. Increasing literacy and mass communications mean that the broad masses of people are not only consumers of information, they also become shapers in the creation, organization, and dissemination of that information. The generation of sources for history is no longer the exclusive property of church and state, nor are the interpretations of the sources and the "writing" of history the exclusive province of academic historians.

The second major factor in the genesis and growth of oral history in modern times has been a series of products of the technological revolution, particularly since the Second World War. The new technology has, on the one hand, deprived historians of at least some of the documentation they relied on in the past. At

least some matters that might, in an earlier age, have been committed to writing are now communicated by telephone, radio, television, or even in face-to-face talks through the relative ease and speed of modern transportation. Furthermore, the ever-readiness of journalists to reproduce, publish, and broadcast information widely and indiscriminately often encourages those who need to protect information temporarily to be wary about what they commit to a permanent and repeatable record that cannot be denied or disputed. At the same time, however, modern technology has provided a means for substituting a new recording medium to capture information that otherwise might have been lost and thereby has created a new source of records for the historian and archivist. The ubiquitous television camera will not soon let us forget the horrors of war in vivid detail, nor the great events of both hope and despair that may be recorded and preserved in video archives. This gives future historians a dimension far exceeding that even of still photographic records of the past century, a dimension to history that the ancient historians hardly dreamt possible. Oral history, at least in its present scale and scope of practice, would not have been possible without the development of lightweight, highly reliable, high fidelity sound recording devices such as the audio-tape recorder and the videotape recorder. The benefit of the convenience, reliability, quality, and inexpensive availability of these recorders to the growth of oral history cannot be overestimated.

The third principal factor in the development of oral history has been the hard and disciplined work and creative imagination of a number of historians who saw and appreciated the great potential of accurately recorded inquiries and memoirs as a means of supplementing written documentation. Among these, Allan Nevins of Columbia University in New York must be acknowledged as a major catalyst and evangelist in the merits of oral history. His energy, devotion, and imaginative use of resources in pursuit of oral history laid much of the groundwork that made possible both its present popularity and its growing acceptance as a useful source for academic history. Nevins' dream of oral history and his practice of it set the challenge and the standard that came to be regarded as a demanding opportunity for improving mastery of the past.

Although oral history has not been without its proponents in other parts of the world, and although its concept and appeal are probably universal, it was particularly in the United States that oral history took hold and developed most rapidly. In part, this was due to an existing technological base that provided lightweight tape recorders in quantity at affordable costs. But, it was also helped by a strong tradition of collecting eye-witness accounts, whether for journalism, historical collections, or for government reports. Eye-witness reports, sometimes rather fancifully

reported and illustrated, were common features of American 19th century newspapers and magazines. H.H. Bancroft, the California publisher and historian, went to great lengths to amass a collection of "old-timer tales" from the development of the American West in the 19th century, and they were saved and placed in the library at the University of California at Berkeley for future use. In the 1930s, under U.S. government sponsorship, many people interviewed former Black slaves and poor Whites in the American South to augment available documentary sources, and many of those "life histories" have been placed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. In 1938, Allan Nevins made his first public plea for oral history to his academic colleagues in a preface to The Gateway to History, /1 in which he bemoaned the passing of a generation of active figures in public life who were leaving behind only an impoverished record of their doings. It was not until 1948, however, that Nevins himself began to put his ideas into practice. In the 1950s, several special-purpose and multi-purpose oral history projects were begun, notably at Nevins' own university, Columbia, and at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). But, growth in the 1950s was relatively slow. In part, this was due to only grudging acceptance by traditional historians, and also in part to the view that oral history interviews were intended solely for the use of scholars and future generations, thus limiting the range of interest. The slow start was also due, not surprisingly, to the relative inconvenience of heavy and cumbersome recording equipment of that period.

The ensuing three decades, the 1960s through the 1980s, have seen a "take-off" in the development and practice of oral history. In the United States, numerous multi-purpose and special-purpose projects came into being between 1960 and 1970; so many, in fact, that their activity and mutual exchanges of information and mutual concerns formed the vortex about which an Oral History Association was created in 1967. By 1973, the Oral History Association had identified no less than 300 oral history centres or projects in the United States, and by the end of that decade the number had grown to over a thousand. Nor has the United States been alone. The concept developed independently and caught on rapidly in several countries around the world. The Oral History Society was formed in the United Kingdom in 1973, followed by national associations for oral history in Canada and Australia in 1974. By the middle of the 1970s, some form of oral history centre or programme had been reported from every one of the five continents, from developed and emerging countries alike. In the United States, university programmes were joined by programmes at

1/ Nevins, Allan. The Gateway to History. (Boston: Appleton-Century, 1938).

each of the presidential libraries, several offices of government, professional and occupational groups, labor unions, churches, and other institutions. Even the National Archives developed a small project to capture the recollections of its founding members who were beginning to retire from public service. In Europe, the emphasis on labour history and folk traditions has dominated oral history work in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Scandanavian countries particularly. In Africa, the emphasis has understandably been on capturing oral traditions, while that in South America and in Southeast Asia has been a combination of political, social and ethnic history. The worldwide development and practical application of oral history is attested to by the establishment of national associations for oral history and by the International Oral History Conference, which held its fifth meeting in Barcelona, Spain, in March 1985.

One issue for oral history must not be overlooked because of its dominance of discussion in the decade of the 1970s, although it generated a great deal more heat than light and has generally faded from concern recently. Two opposing camps were thought to exist: those who used oral history to interview ruling elites in all walks of life; and those who insisted that oral history should be reserved for recording the history of ordinary people. In the words of one exponent of the latter position, "Oral history is not only a tool or method for recovering history; it also is a theory of history which maintains that the common folk and the dispossessed have a history and that this history must be written."/1 It was further held that interviewing elites was a waste of time and effort that might better be employed in the interviewing of these "common folk and the dispossessed." To this argument others replied that it was equally important for historians to have an opportunity to cross-examine elite decision makers, and that indeed history and the public interest would benefit as much from the one form of oral history as the other. Both currents continue to run in the general river of activity that is oral history, but less contentiously and less turbulently in the broader reaches of today than in the narrow gorges of a decade ago.

The popularity of oral history in the United States was given great impetus in the 1970s not only by increasing academic interest, but also by the emergence of popular book versions of oral history and by the American bicentennial celebration. Studs Terkel, a radio journalist from Chicago, published a book about the economic depression of the 1930s that relied heavily on quotations from people who had experienced it. The book became a "best

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1/ Gary Okihiro, "The Writing of Ethnic History," in Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum, editors. (Nashville, U.S.A.: American Association for State and Local History, 1984), p. 206.

seller," and since it was called "oral history" by the author and publisher, even though it was in reality a printed book, the term gained popular currency. Alex Haley's phenomenally successful book, Roots, has, of course, been translated into many languages, and people around the world are familiar with his combination of family oral history and documentary research that produced the first coherent, multi-generational account of an American Black family from its African roots to its modern American citizens. /1 Under the aegis of the national bicentennial, many local history societies and public libraries turned to oral history as an obvious and fitting means of marking the event by capturing reminiscences of the past century from elderly citizens. Inspired by these examples, many people began turning to the tape recorder as a device for "doing oral history."

Proliferation of the practice of recording interviews, not all of it by any means satisfying the criteria of care with which historians might wish it to be employed, has produced its own problems. With the positive benefits of democratisation, broadened scope of inquiry, and increased quantity and variety of sources have come problems of how to accommodate all the records being produced, how to organize information about them to facilitate access for researchers, and how to preserve them properly. Furthermore, doubts have been voiced about the quantity and enduring value of much of the work, and questions about how it is to be appraised and evaluated have arisen. These, of course, are questions that archivists are also asking about other modern sources and information media such as electronic records storage and audiovisual materials. These questions are further complicated for all kinds of records as the clear distinctions between archives and libraries and between records and information become more difficult to sustain in a very fluid world of electronic communications and data storage in random-access memories.

Some efforts have been made to bring traditional reins of discipline to the unruly practice of oral history. The continued high quality of product insisted upon by several of the leading programmes and the increasing use of oral history sources by reputable scholars have formed a critical background against which to judge new work. In 1979, the Oral History Association (U.S.A.) published a set of guidelines to be used by programmes as self-critical criteria. [See section 11.2 of this study, which contains the full text of those guidelines.] As more and more oral history material comes into libraries and archival institutions, orderly procedures for arrangement and description of the materials become more important. Through all of these activities,

1/ A number of oral historians working with African oral traditions have quarrelled with some of Haley's methodology and conclusions, but none can deny the beneficial impact of his work on American Black consciousness or on the popularization of oral history inquiry among American Blacks.

oral history is expected to become more and more a commonly accepted historical source, taking its place along with artifacts and documents as fit objects of study by historians and as fit objects for accession by archival institutions.

2.2 Oral Tradition

Oral tradition, like oral history, has had its share of protagonists and opponents, and it is only recently that it has begun to receive a grudging acceptance from the academic community. It has also been influenced by many of the factors that have affected oral history. The radicalisation of history in the late 1960s, the advent of cheap and portable tape recorders, the post-Second World War resurgence of interest in "oral literature," all have had their impact.

The greatest interest in oral tradition has, however, been exhibited in countries of the developing world. Not only was literacy a relative new-comer in these countries, but by and large these countries had been under colonial domination for varying periods of time. When the colonial yoke was cast aside and independence attained, there was a realisation that such documentation as existed was largely a chronicle of the deeds of the colonizers. Indeed, the colonizers had in many instances deliberately suppressed any indications that the indigenous ruled populations had a history or culture of their own. Sentiments of this nature found expression in the views of such European historians as Hugh Trevor-Roper, who declared that in places like Africa only the activities of the colonizers were fit subjects for proper history.

Most of the early work in oral tradition related to societies in Europe, which already had an established literary background and context. The oral traditions in such societies had, however, been affected by the very existence of writing. As Jan Vansina points out, such traditions tended to be handed down from generation to generation in a rather unsystematic manner. /1 The judgments of the early recorders and users of oral traditions were thus coloured by the very deficiency of the types of traditions that they came into contact with, and criticisms levelled against oral traditions as historical sources were largely invalid precisely because the oral traditions being dealt with lacked many of the essential features of those found in illiterate societies.

While usage of oral traditions as historical sources has been traced back to antiquity, in areas such as Africa the recording of oral traditions can be said to have begun with the start of contact between pre-literate societies and those that had developed the capacity to record. Much of the early recorded history of such

1/ Vansina, Jan. Oral Trandition: A Study in Historical Methodology. (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul), 1965.

societies thus comprises the accounts of early explorers, travellers, and missionaries. The recording of oral traditions must be distinguished from their existence. Oral traditions have existed since remote antiquity. They have often been the only means by which societies without a means of recording could preserve and transmit their history and culture. The systematic recording and analysis of oral traditions assumed significant proportions during the second half of the 20th century.

Vansina has demonstrated the contrasting attitudes towards oral traditions that have existed over the centuries. His discussion of the wide spectrum of views held by various schools of ethnologists in the 19th and early 20th centuries is of interest to archivists who need to realise that while traditions must not be taken at face value, they must not on the other hand be rejected outright. Vansina shows that at one extreme there were those who contended that oral traditions were never reliable and that they contained information that was worthless except as an indication of the direction of certain migrations and cultural diffusion. A second group of ethnologists viewed oral traditions as a historical source containing authentic information but whose reliability could only be accepted if the information contained was in line with evidence derived from archeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, and ethnology. Oral traditions and ethnology constituted the "soft" sources that could lead only to probabilities. Archeology and history were considered "hard" sources of great reliability. Another group saw the chief value of oral traditions as lying in the light that they threw on cultural history, while others felt it was impossible to decide whether a tradition was trustworthy or not. For some, the reliability of oral traditions could not be proved unless there was some measure of agreement between various independent accounts and only if the facts conveyed by oral traditions corresponded with those postulated by cultural historical studies. Another viewpoint was taken by ethnologists, who felt that every tradition contained some information about past events, but that the kernel of historical truth was enveloped in fictitious material. While no reliance could be placed on the form of traditions, their content might be reliable.

Also of interest was the group of ethnologists that felt traditions could not contain any valid information about the past since the content of the traditions was determined entirely by the functions they performed within the social structure as a whole and by their being used as a means of maintaining this structure. Within this school, various strands of thought existed. Some asserted that oral traditions had no historical content but were simply myths invented to meet the demands of particular situations, while others saw traditions as capable of

containing some historical information if there was some motive for transmitting traditions. A further contention was that traditions were inevitably biased and that this bias was inherent in the political and social content. There was no such thing as absolute truth in oral traditions. Lastly, some ethnologists maintained that it was historians who should decide on the reliability of oral traditions, and that this had to be done according to the rules of historical methodology.

Ruth Finnegan, in her extensive investigation of oral sources, has amply demonstrated the way in which oral literature was perceived as belonging to the society and therefore devoid of any individual authorship or originality. Oral tradition was seen as having a purely utilitarian role, without any aesthetic motivation whatsoever. Such assumptions, according to Finnegan, failed critically to realise the changing nature of oral tradition, the way in which each verbal rendition in a unique work affected or influenced by the performer, by his mood and individual creativity, and by his audience. /1

The changing nature of oral tradition should be emphasized while the mistaken assumption that oral traditions could be handed down word-for-word should be seen to have no valid base. Recent studies have shown that the ability of illiterate people to remember is no different from those in literate societies.

Work that has been undertaken into oral tradition within the past three decades has shown that while indeed oral tradition has its own drawbacks as a historical source, it is by no means an inferior source. Vansina has drawn up an elaborate methodology for the evaluation of oral testimonies. The problems of chronology in oral tradition have been accepted and investigated. David Henige has, for instance, shown clearly that king lists can become telescoped or artificially lengthened, names of usurpers can become omitted deliberately, rulers imposed by a foreign suzerain can become expunged from the record, entire epochs can be compressed into generations or reigns of a single ruler, genealogies can be manipulated or even created to fit political realities of the time [a phenomenon, by the way, not unfamiliar to historians of European royal houses], several contemporaneous contenders for a throne can be shown as successive rulers, and founders of dynasties can be given excessively long reigns. /2 The validity and reliability of written evidence has also been found to have its shortcomings. Written

1/ Finnegan, Ruth. Oral Literature in Africa. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

2/ Henige, David. The Chronology of Oral Tradition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

accounts of early explorers, traders, and missionaries regarding illiterate societies they encountered have in several instances been found to be inaccurate. Some of these early recorders often failed to grasp certain concepts within the societies that they encountered. They often imposed their own interpretations of events or failed to understand the social structure, mistaking for instance high officials for rulers or titles for proper names.

While oral traditions can benefit from auxiliary disciplines such as archeology, cultural history, linguistics, and social anthropology, they must also be seen as containing within themselves the checks and balances required for verification. They have a primary and overriding value in the documentation of societies without writing, but they must also be seen to have a value in societies which have a long history of literacy. Particularly illustrative of this latter aspect is the work of the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society and the Centre for Oral Traditions in the United Kingdom. The former has among its collections folktales, anecdotes, religious legends, aetiological legends and myths, ancient poems, rhymed folksongs, popular beliefs, proverbs, and riddles. While these are preserved largely in written form, their point of transferrence from mouth to paper must be borne in mind. In fact, they are reflective of the process by which oral traditions are gradually being recorded and therefore preserved in audio and written form. In generations to come, the transcripts of oral traditions will cease to exercise their overpowering oral nature, and they will be used by researchers just as one additional written source that has been in existence for ages. Like the history books written fourteen centuries ago, they will be seen as a record of a particular society or culture at that point in time. There are already ample cases where, for instance, parties to a chieftainship dispute have quoted the recorded traditions as support for their respective claims.

3.0 THE VARIETIES OF ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

3.1 Oral History

One of the perverse characteristics of oral history, and one that encourages continued suspicion among more traditional historians, is the widespread and largely undisciplined quality of its examples. The apparent simplicity of the task of recording an interview with another person, and the ready availability of the means of doing so, result in "oral history" being done by many who are not properly trained to do it well. The products may be as profound as a discussion between thoughtful physicists on the impact of relativity theory on the course of 20th century scientific research or as insipid and inane as a childish attempt to imitate an interview of television journalism. The term "oral history" is generic rather than specific, and therefore is common property. It may be applied freely to a wide range of activities, materials, and publications, some of which are neither oral nor historical, and from which conscientious and highly disciplined historians and archivists might well wish to disassociate themselves. It is applied imprecisely to printed publications of highly edited and unattributed excerpts from personal interviews as readily as it is to tape recordings of highly-focused inquiries that are part of scholarly research. Personal interviewing with a tape recorder is done not only by scholars and graduate students in history, it is done by journalists, television entertainers, psychologists, gerontologists, legal investigators, and even by grade-school children. It is done not only in the service of the discipline of history but also in the service of other associated disciplines in the social sciences, particularly anthropology, psychology, and political science. All of these uses include at least enough retrospective inquiry and testimony for the product to be loosely historical and oral, and may therefore be classified as "oral history" by its creators. Recordings and transcripts from any of these endeavors may come into an archival institution identified as oral history, individually or as part of a manuscript collection or record unit. Some, of course, may not be indentified as oral history, but as merely another item in the collection or record unit. In these cases, "oral history" products are little different from the wide variety and diversity of books that may be offered to a library, or paintings that may be considered for inclusion in a museum. A wide variety of repositories having different aims and methods may collect and acquire oral history materials. Folklore collections, radio and television broadcasting archives, sound centres and audiovisual collections, libraries, and traditional archives all may collect or acquire them, either deliberately and systematically or incidentally in other collecting and acquisition activities.

It is important, therefore, that the archivist come to understand the means of appraising oral history for archival purposes. Some of the foregoing discussion of oral history and oral

tradition in their historiographic context may contribute to such appraisal; but, the archivist also needs to appreciate the range and variety of forms that the material may take.

Oral historians themselves have been ambivalent about what to include and what to exclude from the accepted definition of oral history. Some are not very comfortable with anything that is not rigorously and tightly disciplined as historical inquiry, with primary allegiance to the standard historical traditions of that profession, including a narrow appreciation of the rules of evidence. Others are more open to experimentation and to less critical acceptance of the fruits of journalism and folklore collection within the framework of oral history. Many, indeed, feel quite comfortable with any form of recorded historical inquiry, even such as may be used for pedagogy or geriatric therapy, without any control by the canons of historical research. Some even accept contemporaneous recordings of meetings or speeches as a kind of "oral history" among general collections of sound recordings. This broad acceptance by at least some of the "professors" of oral history means that the task of appraisal by archivists is just that much harder. The archivist cannot assume that all of oral history is a single, coherent class, capable of being evaluated on the basis of a single, consistent set of criteria. The archivist will first discover what kind of oral history is being considered, and then use good archival judgment within the item's own context about its lasting value.

Even within the more tightly disciplined, historiographic, central core of academic oral history there are some differences. The "elitist" versus "mass" focus has already been mentioned in the previous section. Allan Nevins observed in 1967 at the second American colloquium on oral history that there were likely to develop two sorts of oral history, one of which he called the "rifle" approach and the other the "shotgun" approach. By these terms he meant that oral history could be used in the service of very narrow, limited objectives of traditional historical research, often in the service of more typical research in written documents, or that it could be used to capture broad ranges of personal eye-witness testimony to cover whole periods of time or whole fields of human endeavor. Each kind of inquiry yields a slightly different sort of product and is put to slightly different kinds of use by historians.

Oral historians also sometimes distinguish between "archival oral history" and other forms of the craft. Although to an archivist such employment of the term is careless, they mean by "archival" that the interviewing and its product are designed to produce a large corpus of documentation across a broad range of subjects and interests, and that the product is intended for future general use rather than service to a specific research project. These "archival" oral history collections may be further divided

into "multi-purpose" and "single-purpose" collections. The former are broadly eclectic, seizing on opportunities as they arise to capture a wide variety of historically significant testimony. The latter is usually devoted to the history of a single individual, institution, or organization across a broad span of time and activities.

Oral history may, of course, be calssified according to the major focus of its interviewing. It may be autobiographical, in which a memoirist is the chief author but is assisted by an interviewer; it may be biographical, in which the interviewer takes on the principal role and interviews widely about an individual among his friends, relations, and acquaintances; it may be institutional, ethnic, political, military, labor, business, or whatever may be deemed an appropriate avenue of historical inquiry and research. These distinctions are often more important to the initial producers and users of the product than they are to archivists.

There are those who have argued that the most effective sort of oral history is the intensive "oral biography" or "assisted autobiography." In this form or oral history, one person is interviewed intensively and extensively about his life experiences. The interviewing relies heavily on the written records of the person's life, and it is an exhaustive search for the total memory and reflections of the subject. The interviewing may be supplemented by interviews with close friends, family members, social and business or professional associates, and (sometimes very importantly) opponents and enemies when possible. The object is for the product to be the definitive source of information about the life in question. It may be left in audiotape and/or transcript form, or there may be an additional step in which the raw material is worked into a lucid narrative, either written or spoken on tape, integrating the oral and documentary research to develop a total history.

Archivists face yet another question that arises in considering the variety of oral history, and that is whether they themselves should engage in oral history interviewing, or whether they should allow their archival institutions to engage in it. There is no doubt that interviewing, properly done, is a demanding task, and should not be attempted on a part-time basis by someone who has other primary responsibilities. But archivists may be detached from archival duties for a period of intensive work in oral history and then returned to their original responsibilities. There is one school that argues that the archivist who engages in oral history interviewing and creation of the very records he must later administer becomes inevitably an advocate or critic about materials requiring his detachment and neutrality. This school argues that the archivist himself must not engage in the creation of the record if he is expected to maintain integrity and credibility as primary values of archival administration for the benefit of others. The opposing school of thought, permitting oral history

interviewing and collection by archival institutions and their staffs, argues that archivists (of all people) are in unique positions of privilege to have access to more sources and therefore to know more about the existing documentation, and finally to know what the significant historical questions are that require answers. They can best judge where oral history can be used with profit to supplement the written record, and can produce the best oral history under conditions of relatively scarce resources. Furthermore, it is argued, archivists are seldom as neutral as they might perhaps wish to be. They provide advice on records management in the dynamic and ongoing process of government or institutional administration, and in many cases seek to do so throughout the entire "life cycle of records." Moreover, in their fundamental tasks of appraisal and disposal they make decisions about historical value that inevitably affect the source base upon which future research must rest, and these decisions are inevitably coloured by the prevailing set of values as much as they are by objective historical judgment (even if archivists should and can do a little better than the non-archivist).

The sources from which oral history materials are obtained by archival institutions vary widely, as may be surmised from the foregoing discussion. Oral history material may come to a repository as an integral part of an accession of written records from a government agency. It may come as part of a collection of personal papers donated to the institution because of their historical significance. It may come as part of an audiovisual collection or record group. It may come as a distinct entity in itself, an oral history collection created by someone else, with its own supporting documentation. Individual tapes and transcripts may arrive piecemeal as the product of an ongoing oral history interviewing programme of the archival institution itself or from another agency.

The medium of oral history also varies widely, from shorthand notes on paper to detailed typewritten transcripts of recorded dialogue, from obsolete wire recordings to highly sophisticated multi-track audio and video recordings on magnetic tape or on disks normally used for music. The most common forms to date, however, are the standard magnetic audiotape and the typewritten transcript on paper.

3.2 Oral Tradition

Oral tradition exists in a variety of forms. The archivist preparing to accession, arrange, and describe oral tradition materials needs to understand the differences among these varieties.

A very broad distinction can be made between those traditions such as poems that have a fixed format and those in

prose, such as tales, whose format is not fixed. As noted earlier, however, even the fixed format traditions are not handed down through the generations in word-perfect form. Beyond this general categorisation will be a classification of traditions in accordance with the experience of the classifier and the types existing in the societies he has encountered. The diversity of oral tradition is however not so helpful trying to impose order on accessioned traditions and trying to provide easy access to researchers and other users.

By far the most comprehensive and useful typology is that developed by Jan Vansina, in which oral traditions are seen as falling into five major groupings. The first group consists of formulae - stereotyped phrases used in special circumstances. These include titles describing a person's status; slogans describing the character of a group of people; didactic formulae such as proverbs, riddles, sayings, and epigrams; and ritual formulae used in religious ceremonies or rites of magic. The second category is comprised of poetry. This is seen as a tradition in fixed form, which form is considered along with the content as artistic by the society in which it exists and is transmitted. Poems are further divided into official and private poems. Official poetry includes songs and poems providing historical accounts, panegyric poetry for praise, religious poetry for prayer, hymns, and dogmatic texts. Personal poetry is composed to give free expression to feelings. The third category is lists of place names, such as sites passed through during a period of migration, and lists of personal names. Genealogies are included in this category. Tales, the fourth group, consist of testimonies in prose with free form text. They are varied in nature and include general, local, and family history; myths or didactic tales intended for instruction or explanation of the world, the culture, and society; and artistic tales meant to please the listener. Vansina's inclusion within this category of personal recollections transmitted without control and simply preserved in the memory of the informant has drawn considerable criticism from those who see this as falling within the realm of oral history. The final category consists of commentaries which include legal precedents supplying directives for solving legal problems and thereby creating law; explanatory commentaries recited at the same time as the historical traditions to which they are attached; and occasional commentaries made only in answer to a question but nevertheless existing primarily as a record of historical facts and not merely in order to provide explanations.

In summary, the categories recommended by Vansina for oral tradition are:

<u>formulae</u> - titles; slogans; didactic formulae; ritual formulae

<u>poetry</u> - historical; panegyric; religious; personal

<u>lists</u> - place names; personal names

<u>tales</u> - general; local; family; aetiological myths; artistic; personal memories

commentaries - precedents; auxiliary; occasional comments.

While it is convenient and neat to draw these distinctions, those who record oral traditions sometimes do not bother to make them. Most collectors do not even distinguish between oral tradition and oral history, even though some insist that oral history should be limited to direct experience of the present generation only. The archivist has a problem in description, however, that cannot be ignored. He may have several of these varieties included in one tape, and adequate description requires that they be identified and named. Only after this has been done can the material readily be accessible to researchers.

4.0 RECORDING ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

4.1 The Issue of Archival Participation

Oral history and oral tradition materials may come to the archivist in three ways: receipt as an integral part of the records accessioned from a local, state, or central government agency, or the records of a private organization or individual as acquired by the archival institution; acquisition of an oral history collection or a collection of oral tradition recordings as an entity in its own right, perhaps collected by another organization or institution such as a research institute or university; and lastly, the archivist himself may engage in the identification, recording, and collection of oral sources for the archives. It is this latter means of acquisition that has aroused considerable controversy among archivists.

The main arguments against participation by archivists in the actual formulation and collection of the records of oral sources center on the scarcity of resources and presumed lack of expertise for the work by archivists. Involvement is seen as a very expensive and indefensible dissipation of scarce resources, an act of professional negligence in the face of the urgent need for resources to accession, arrange, and describe written records that have not received such attention because of economic scarcity. It is further argued that the archivist is ill-trained for such intensive and critical examination as may be required for identifying and recording oral sources since he lacks experience in research of non-written sources. Furthermore, it is contended that involvement in the actual creation of source records puts him in an invidious position which detracts from his neutrality and integrity, and thereby from the integrity of other sources he may be administering.

Protagonists of archival involvement, however, are many, and may be found among historians and archivists in both the developed and developing countries. There is a special urgency to the case put by those from developing countries. They argue cogently that in the absence of written documentary sources and without specialized institutions to undertake the collection of oral sources, it would be professionally and culturally a betrayal to neglect this function. Holdings that are largely reflective of the history of the colonisers present a huge imbalance that requires urgent redress. The only feasible means of doing so is through the deliberate and careful collection of oral traditions.

Other arguments are also marshalled in defense of archival participation. The archivist, as has been noted, is in a unique position to assess the deficiencies in existing sources and is thus eminently suited to know what else oral documentation may be able to contribute. While interviewing and recording are acknowledged to be special skills, they are skills which archivists may

already have, or which they are capable of acquiring and mastering. Further, most archivists are themselves historians and have training in historical methodology. Finally, the nature of programme funding in the collection of oral documentation is such that it is specifically devoted to that one task, and the refusal of an archivist to take on the responsibility of oral tradition collection would not release or produce greater resources for more traditional archival work with written documents. The funding would simply go elsewhere, a less desirable result, to institutions willing and capable of performing the task.

It is perhaps with the foregoing debate in mind that those institutions responding positively to a survey questionnaire on "archives and oral tradition" [See section 10.0.] endorsed the legitimacy of oral history and oral tradition as archival functions, and that a significant proportion supported actual involvement of archivists in the collection and recording process. It should also be noted that some very specialised archival institutions were created expressly for the purpose of collecting oral sources, and they are ipso facto outside the controversy.

Whether the archivist is actually involved in recording oral sources or is a passive recipient of the end product, it is necessary for him to know and understand the manner in which it has been gathered. This is no different from the way in which he goes about his other traditional tasks, for in arranging records in archives he cannot confirm or reconstitute (when necessary) the original order if he has no understanding of the process that brought the records into being in the first place.

4.2 Oral History Interviewing

The personal interview is the most common form of creating and acquiring oral history sources. Personal interviews usually have two participants, an interviewer and a respondent, often referred to rather awkwardly as the "interviewee." Interviews with multiple inquirers and/or multiple respondents are not unknown, but they are uncommon since they often produce confused overlapping of voices on the recording and tend towards whimsical choices of subjects depending on the vagaries of the group. A personal interview in which one inquirer deliberately and systematically probes the memory of another is usually the most productive alternative. The interview is designed and intended to use a series of questions to produce thoughtful, candid, and accurate recollections and reflections about the past which has been directly experienced by the respondent. The memory of an individual may be seen as analagous to written sources in that it contains much information about the past. The interviewer is cast in the role of researcher, employing questions and seeking answers orally as the means of access to and retrieving information from the source. The dialogue produced by this process is recorded to preserve its conduct and content, and it is reserved for future reference. Each interview

or interview session is a discrete event of record in acquiring oral history source material, and a series of interview sessions with one person (or group) or a series of interviews or interviews with several different people about one central theme may be combined to form a collection. Interviews may be the product of projects focused narrowly on one particular subject, or they may be the product of programmes consisting of several or many projects.

4.2.1 Planning and Preparation

Oral history is most productive as a useful source for history when it is applied deliberately and thoughtfully. It is least useful when it is redundant to common knowledge already recorded elsewhere or cluttered with trivial information lacking in historical significance. It shares these characteristics with all other forms of records and documentation. Therefore, careful planning and preparation are required to be certain that oral history inquiry is the best means for obtaining the information required, that a representative sample of the best available people experienced in the matters to be researched is chosen to respond, that interviewers are selected for their knowledge of the subjects and for their skill at interviewing, and that interviewers be matched carefully to interviewees to produce the best opportunity for fruitful results. Orderliness of procedures and strict accountability of all materials are required to assure the integrity and authenticity of the product. Legal and ethical considerations with respect to the property of the interview product (the record of the interview), the relationships between the project and those interviewed, the relationships between the interviewers and respondents, and the relationships between the interviewers and the project administration must all be established and mastered to mutual satisfaction so as to avoid future contention over use of the product and to avoid the fact or even the appearance of a limiting self-interest in the project design and execution.

4.2.2 Prior Research

The quality of an interview is dependent in part on the mastery that an interviewer already has over the subjects to be discussed. This mastery, grounded in research in available sources to the extent possible prior to the interview, must be sufficient to produce good and searching questions that in turn bring out the most candid and thorough responses from the person being interviewed. This impresses upon the respondent the seriousness of the job at hand and convinces him that the interview is worth doing well and thoroughly. Early respect for the knowledge and understanding of the interviewer by the respondent also discourages facile and self-serving distortion in the responses to questions. Preparation should be thorough enough to assure that no potentially fruitful line of inquiry is ignored, to discourage the respondent from prevaricating, and to challenge the respondent to make his

own most earnest effort to meet and attain the objectives of the interview. Prior research is also essential to set the objectives of each individual interview session within a framework of information and insight that is already on the record, and for framing broader objectives of projects and programmes.

4.2.3 Interview Location and Circumstances

The place of interview and the characteristics of its surroundings may contribute to or detract from the quality of an interview, and they should be chosen carefully to produce the best opportunity for high quality sound recording and for thoughtful and searching concentration by all parties to the interview. Distractions, disruptions, interruptions, and intrusive background noise (including electric motors and air conditioning units or vehicular traffic nearby) should be avoided whenever possible, although it is seldom possible to have first-class studio conditions totally lacking in such distractions. A location in which both parties to an interview feel comfortable and yet formally committed to earnest inquiry as partners exploring the familiar past is most likely to improve the quality of an interview. Equally important is the effective matching of interviewer to respondent. An unskilled or uninformed interviewer cannot and will not be taken seriously by any respondent who has a significant contribution to make. Similarly, an interviewer who intrudes his own perceptions to overwhelm those of the respondent will probably destroy the potential usefulness of the interview as a unique contribution to expanded documentation, knowledge, and understanding of the past. A balance of perceived mutual interest, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the process at hand are all essential to the most useful results.

4.2.4 Equipment

The quality of interview results are also affected by the degree to which recording equipment and its operation by the interviewer or interviewing team intrude upon the dynamics of the interview dialogue. This effect varies depending on the sensitivitity of participants to outside distractions and to the consciousness of being recorded, on the size and appearance of the equipment, and on the need for attention to operating the machinery by the interviewer. These considerations argue for equipment that is small, highly reliable, simple to operate, requiring little support from power sources, and requiring little monitoring or adjustment in the course of the interview. For this reason, small, portable cassette tape recorders are often used for interviewing. However, sound quality is diminished when inexpensive microphones and recording equipment are used, and the smaller, thinner, and narrower the magnetic tape and the slower its recording speed, the poorer will be the quality of the recorded sound. High quality magnetic audiotape recording for archival purposes (long-lasting high-quality records) requires high quality equipment, good omni-directional microphones

(assisted preferably by the clip-on microphones that attach to the speaker's clothing), broad, thick tape, and a faster recording speed. Clearly, ideal conditions for equipment can seldom be attained any more than they can for interview surroundings, but it is important to assess the needs of each unique situation and use this guidance to produce the optimum results.

4.2.5 Technique

Mastery of effective interviewing technique, although no substitute for mastery of subject knowledge, is also an essential contribution to productive and useful oral history interviewing. Mastery of subjects and a continuing passion for inquiry may carry an interviewer a long way towards success, but interviewing technique skillfully applied may occasionally make the critical difference between a very good interview and an excellent one. Most manuals on interviewing style urge interviewers to develop good rapport with those they interview while at the same time to maintain sufficient detachment that the capacity for critical challenge may be preserved and used when needed. They counsel that the interviewer's role is to encourage development of ideas by the respondent, not to expound theses himself, yet to be ready with challenging propositions to which there may be interesting and informative responses, and to supply known and well-established facts when groping for them by the respondent may distract from the principal train of thought. Good interviewers are those who recognize and pursue fruitful lines of inquiry until they are exhausted, even when they were not originally in the interviewing plan suggested by research; who recognize allusions and pursue them to develop their relevance to understanding the matter at hand; who can store up tangential lines of inquiry as they suggest themselves, and then wait for the most auspicious opportunities to raise them; who permit respondents to complete their thoughts and lines of development before interrupting or leading discussion in another direction; who use general and specific questions as the occasion requires; and who can use silence and patience while waiting for a response. Such techniques, and many more, when combined with careful attention to planning, research, location, interview circumstances, and equipment, can combine to produce the best opportunities for useful results in oral history interviews.

4.2.6 The Respondent

The final ingredient to a successful interview is the most important one of all, the willing cooperation and enthusiastic commitment and participation of a respondent who is well-versed and well-experienced in the subjects for discussion, who has a fine memory for detail, and who is himself a thoughtful and critical reflector on the significance of past events and a good judge of character, and articulate withall to provide the descriptions necessary to complete understanding. Not all res-

pondents are so thoroughly endowed with these attributes, just as not all interviewers are equally adept at interviewing techniques, and results vary in practice depending on the skill, capacity, and cooperation of those involved. Good interviewers know when they have a poor respondent, know how to make several tries at improving the situation, know how to get the most out of a difficult situation and retire from the interview gracefully, with no loss of prestige or dignity on either side. Similarly, good interviewers recognize when they have a respondent who proves a richer source than at first imagined, and they know how to extend an original commitment to derive maximum historical benefit from the opportunity.

4.2.7 The Interview Process and the Record

As noted above, a good record of the interview process itself is essential to establishing the authenticity and integrity of an interview, and it is useful in documenting the provenance of each interview. The interviewer has certain responsibilities to record some data necessary to basic administrative control of the recorded interview at each step of the interview process, as follows:

1) All communications with the prospective interviewee should be recorded in a basic file of correspondence and communications pertinent to that interview or series of interviews with that person. The file should include memoranda of conversations, letters, formal agreements about the purpose, nature, scope, and future use of the interview product, and the terms and conditions under which the interview is conducted and processed.

2) Each record of an interview (usually an audiotape stored in a box) should be labelled with the following information:

a) name of respondent
b) date of interview
c) location of interview
d) recording speed of tape (inches/centimeters per second)
e) duration of interview (hours, minutes, and seconds for each reel or cassette used)
f) name of interviewer
g) sequence of tapes (by numbering when more than one tape is used)
h) the project/programme for which the interview was undertaken.

3) The interviewer is the best person able to know when the interviewing of a respondent is completed, after only one session or after many sessions. When interviewing is considered complete - when all useful inquiry is deemed to have been exhausted - then a notation to that effect should go into the principal correspondence file for that person.

4) The interviewer is responsible for recording the degree and nature of research that went into the interview preparation, the sources consulted in that research, and for any unusual circumstances surrounding the interview that might explain anomalies or omissions in the interview itself. These notes should go into the main correspondence file pertaining to the interview.

5) The main file should also include a log of each interview session, including the information entered onto the tape in item 2), above, and this, too, is the responsibility of the interviewer.

Thus, the basic correspondence file becomes the "case file" for a given respondent's participation in the programme, and a basic source for locating information about the interview in all its aspects. Upon completion of interviewing this file should be turned over to the programme administrator for inclusion in a master file of all such programme records. Additional information and records may be added to the case file during processing. [See "Archival Management of the Record" in section 6.0, below.]

4.2.8 Interviewing Methodology - The Interview

Interviewing methodology may be idiosyncratic, depending on the particular discipline being served by the interviewer (history, political science, anthropology, etc.) or on the preferences of the interviewer. Some programmes try to obtain a variety of disciplinary perspectives by using several different interviewers to interview the same respondent. The typical interview, however, falls into three phases.

The first phase is a period in which certain basic facts of identification (participants, location, general purpose of the interview, date, etc.) and other preliminary information may be spoken and recorded on the audiotape. It is also a period in which the participants begin to develop a sense of each other and a rapport to sustain the more important portions of the interview.

The second phase of the interview, which is the longest one and may be divided topically into several sub-phases, is one in which the interviewer leads the respondent through an exercise of recalling and commenting on many topics pertinent to the main theme and lines of research of the interviewing programme. The interviewer may rely on a hand-held check-list, an interviewing outline or plan and on certain outstanding reference data (dates of major events, etc.) to assure that nothing significant is omitted; but, exhaustive lists of specific questions are generally distracting and more limiting than they are helpful. The interviewer must be free of such limitations so he may be able to punctuate the dialogue with apt questions to pursue this or that development

in the course of the interview. The interviewer's role is not only to probe the other person's memory for recollections and reflections on the topics posed, but to identify and develop the respondent's role and association with the subjects so that historians may have a better means of assessing the importance of the testimony provided.

The third and final phase of the interview is an opportunity for the respondent to take the initiative, for him to be invited to add any comments or subjects he feels have been overlooked or insufficiently developed, so that more assurance can be provided of the interview's exhaustive nature. It is also the phase in which the interviewer disengages himself from the interview proper and excuses himself with thanks to the respondent for participation in the programme. It may include in the oral recording any last-minute discussions about the terms and conditions of the future use of the material, and any reservations the respondent may attach to his participation in the programme.

4.2.9 Interviewing Methodology - Respondent Selection

Selection of respondents also depends in part on the discipline being served. Some programmes lean more heavily on statistical sampling to provide a representative group of interview prospects from a large and diverse population. Others may develop lists of likely candidates from research in written sources, or from preliminary interviewing designed to identify those most deeply involved in or most crucial to the developments of an issue or event. Attention to balance is necessary, particularly in cases where contentious issues were involved, so that the several sides to an issue may be fairly represented in the sources available to future historical analysis that seeks to master the past without deception or distortion. This sense of balance may also be very important in more prosaic and domestic historical inquiry, where the various roles of family members or members of a community may bring quite different perspectives to bear on subjects and events. Exhaustiveness of coverage is another variable that contributes to the success of a programme and the usefulness of its product, but it is a variable without specific rules and guides. There is in all such inquiry a point of diminishing returns, when the added information is so substantially redundant to that already collected that it is unlikely to produce anything new or significant, even in the way of corroboration, that interviewing should be broken off and the project or programme closed. But this is a judgment to be made at the time by project/programme administrators and their advisers.

4.3 Recording Oral Tradition

The recording of oral tradition onto audiotape or some other medium of storage is the climax of a long and often arduous process of preparation. The many considerations that go into preparing an oral history interview have equal applicability to oral

tradition recording. However, because oral traditions are society-based, transmitted through many generations, and often narrated or recited continuously, the question-and-answer pattern characteristic of oral history interviewing is not used in the recording of oral tradition. The person recording oral tradition must reduce his participation to a minimum, becoming a listener rather than a participant once the fundamental identifications of the item are established. The objective is to record an existing social phenomenon, not to engage in dialogue with the source of that tradition.

The nature and geographical location of oral traditions also often require longer preparatory contact and familiarity with the society and culture in which the traditions are found. Such a familiarisation period can extend into months or even years. It is also worth noting that where oral history is largely but albeit not exclusively an activity carried out by nationals within their own borders and localities, oral tradition has in the past attracted a large number of foreign students and researchers into the countries where the traditions originated and continue to exist. Foreign researchers have had to reckon with such preparations as affiliation to a local institution, acquisition of a research permit, and learning one or more local languages. Each country has its own requirements and situations, and precise advice cannot be given to foreign researchers except to warn that such requirements may exist and should be dealt with in the very early stages of preparation to avoid frustrations and disappointments later.

4.3.1 Preliminary Preparation

No recording of oral tradition should be attempted until adequate preparations have been completed. Each situation is unique and must be handled on the basis of its own requirements. Initial preparation includes identification of the subject area in which it is intended to probe. This identification needs to take into account all existing sources of information. It should also entail pinpointing the geographical areas and the societies in which the traditions are expected to be found and recorded. At this stage it is also necessary to establish channels of communication that will facilitate contact with the society in which the traditions exist. It would be foolhardy to proceed into detailed preparations only to find out too late that local administrators might not grant access to the society, or perhaps that prevailing protocol might require authorisation by local political party functionaries , who (if overlooked or slighted) might obstruct rather than facilitate access.

As these areas are being cleared, other arrangements must also be looked into. Recording equipment must be acquired and it must be capable of operating in the locality of research. The availability of electric power, or its absence, must be ascertained, and each eventuality prepared for. Equipment should be rugged, reliable, portable, and capable of operating on either battery or mains (line current) power. If operating on mains, voltage adapters and line surge suppressors may be required for effective operation

of equipment. If the field trip is to be lengthy, with little prospect of resupply, it is advisable to carry a battery tester and recharger and spares. Many recordings have been ruined by weakened batteries that slow tape speed and play havoc with recording quality. In many developing countries, batteries are imported items and may not be available in local retail outlets.

Transportation and accommodations must be taken into account. The terrain to be traversed must be examined and appropriate transport secured. Many field workers find that four-wheel-drive vehicles are required. The transport vehicle must be rugged and reliable, for it can be both heart-breaking and expensive to have to make a three-hundred-kilometer trip to replace a radiator cap or fuel pump. Securing accommodation may require constant communication and liaison with the local administrators or with other agencies that may be involved with various tasks in the locality, particularly with respect to the movement of foreign nationals.

Finally, consideration must be given to the issue of remuneration or reward for the oral tradition "performance" that is recorded. This is a particularly delicate matter and must be considered only after a very careful and thorough understanding of the local culture has been mastered. Researchers must be warned that even knowledge gained from existing literature may be out-dated when the society is actually encountered, and this argues for extreme care and avoidance of presumption. Each situation must be assessed and responded to as it arises, on its own merits. But, while some oral tradition work manuals advise that some sort of reward must be given, any programme operated by an archives must be wary of the problems that such a policy can create. In the first place, resource support for rewards is probably unavailable from most archival budgets. Secondly, although there is a great willingness of informants to part with their knowledge for the sake of community interest and posterity, and to do so freely in most cases, should they discover that some form of payment can and will be made if necessary, the tendency to insist upon it is often too tempting to resist. Indeed, it has been discovered that some informants have responded to the prospect of reward in a most business-like manner, fabricating information in order to increase the benefits to be gained. For the foreign researcher these pitfalls may be even greater. Not only may there be no alternative to reward (since there is no apparent local or national benefit that the foreigner may be able to invoke credibly) but the foreign researcher may not be able to recognize fabrications when they do occur. Even knowledgeable foreign researchers may miss subtle deception.

Once these preliminary preparations have been dispensed with, it will then be time to venture into the field. Indeed, preliminary contacts or visits may already have been made. While the foregoing may be seen as implying that oral traditions

are to be found and therefore recorded in remote areas only, the emphasis is merely an acknowledgement of the preponderance of oral traditions in these environments. Fieldwork preparation may sometimes be no more than preparing to record traditions in a society a few scant kilometers from an urban centre, or even in the urban environment itself.

4.3.2 Field Preparations

In spite of the extensive preparations mentioned above, when the interviewer/recorder/researcher eventually arrives in the locality or society in which it is intended to record oral tradition, it would be inexpedient to rush into the recording process. To begin with, if the researcher has an inadequate grasp of the local language, it may be necessary to secure the services of an interpreter or interpreters. This process may not be so simple as it seems, for the success of the entire venture may depend upon it. An interpreter who is unpopular in the community may close doors that would otherwise open, and one who is a non-entity may fail to open any at all. On the other hand, the best go-between may not be the best interpreter. Therefore, selection of an interpreter/ambassador requires a certain amount of care and knowledge of the local situation.

It is essential in the very early stages to decide on the quality and quantity of informants to be recorded. A cardinal rule of recording oral tradition is that as many variants of a tradition as possible should be recorded. The key word here, of course, is "possible," for the practical limitations decide the ultimate course of fieldwork. In selecting informants there are numerous considerations to be made. In general, however, there are two broad categories of traditions, comprising those that have been entrusted to a specialised group and those whose transmittal, preservation, and narration is uncontrolled throughout the society. In the former case, the choice of informants is naturally limited by the number of custodians that have been entrusted with the subject traditions. While such traditions are usually formal and known thoroughly by the appointed custodians, they are also likely to be generally known throughout the populace, and care must be taken to assure that recordings are made with the "official" custodians. The non-formal traditions are handed down through the generations in a more haphazard manner; and they therefore exist in a variety of forms known by many people.

The person collecting traditions must try to discover the variants of the traditions that exist. As he does so, he should also from observation and inquiry discover the norms of the society. There are, for instance, traditions that may be narrated only within a certain environment or locality, and in other instances women are not permitted and should not be asked to narrate traditions. To ask men, women, and children to sit together during a recording session may be construed as an insult by the men in some societies, and may produce their refusal to cooperate further. In other societies it may make no difference.

There are no hard and fast or universal rules

on which the researcher/collector may rely as he moves from place to place. Each situation must be assessed on its own merits, according to its own peculiarities and requirements. The gatherer of oral traditions must be aware of the many possible difficulties and prepare for them. Once he has done all the necessary goundwork, has identified the traditions and the informants, and once the community has become familiar with him and understands and sympathises with his aims, then he may proceed to record the traditions. [Note that although the social context is often very different for oral history interviewing, similar preparation, care, and sensitivity to local mores or the customs of a particular occupational or other group may be essential to gain the commitment and cooperation of those to be recorded, and insensitivity to such things may wreck an interviewing project.]

4.3.3 Recording

A major difference between oral and written sources is the extent to which the recording situation imposes itself and influences the resultant product. The person recording traditions affects their quality first by his choice of informants and second by his role during the recording. [Again, note the parallel here to the same factors in oral history interviews.] Oral tradition recording can also be affected by the audience which may often be present during a narration or recitation. The audience may be and sometimes is expected to intrude into the narration to affirm important points or to correct inaccuracies.

When recording oral traditions, it is essential to do so in an atmosphere in which the informant or informants are best able to render the traditions. A choice may have to be made between using a video recorder, a sound recorder, taking written notes, or merely listening carefully so as to be able to remember sufficiently to write down the substance later. One should consider whether the narration will be a group or individual affair, whether it should be done in public or in private, whether a reward should be offered or not, and for how long the recording should continue.

The work of Vansina, Henige, and others has provided guidelines which those recording oral tradition can follow. There are also many examples illustrative of the problems that can be encountered and the frustrations that can be experienced. Paul Irwin, for instance shows how a single informant can change his testimony on different occasions in his frustrating experience with Liptako. /1

1/ Irwin, Paul. Liptako Speaks. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). [The history of a 19th century West Africa emirate derived from oral traditions.]

In spite of the diversity of circumstances in which recordings might have to be done, certain general points remain true in any situation. First, there must be complete rapport between the person recording or collecting and those who provide the information, and the method of recording must be one acceptable to the informant(s). Second, the interview must be conducted in an atmosphere most reassuring to the informant and in which he can be at ease. Third, when recording group narrations, group dynamics must be taken into account. Lastly, as far as possible all variants of a tradition should be recorded, and when feasible several recordings should be made over a period of time.

4.3.4 Supporting Documents

For oral traditions to be understood, verified, authenticated, and used as a historical source, the documentation that goes into preparing the recording is as important as the recording itself. The choice of informant, the peculiarities of the situation, the method of transmission, the nature of the tradition, the recording situation - all these are vital for an understanding of the tradition. Equally important is documentation relating to the handling of the recording. The information listed under sections 4.2.7 and 6.0 for oral history is as necessary to oral tradition, and there must be full control as the tapes are being accessioned, transcribed, arranged, and described.

5.0 EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

As noted previously, oral history and oral tradition records may appear in a wide variety of recording media. However, to preserve the greater historical and interpretive value of the original source as actually spoken, the technology of sound reproduction is required as a minimum. In more recent years it has become practical to add a visual aspect to the record through the use of video-sound recordings that combine both visual images and sound images on magnetic tape, and still more recently on video-disk or optical digital disks read by lasers. Still photographs, of course, have long been used to give a visual supplement to audio recordings just as they have to written texts. Sound motion picture film, although a feasible medium for recording oral sources, is expensive, and the film product disintegrates rapidly under heavy use, incurring more cost for expensive duplication and progressive loss of image quality.

The following discussion is limited to magnetic audiotape, and a very few brief notes on magnetic videotape, which will remain the more common form of recording media for oral history and oral tradition for some time to come because they are relatively simple and inexpensive and more readily available throughout the world. Only if technological advances in video-disk and optical digital disk recording devices and playback equipment become much simpler and much cheaper are we likely to see their extensive employment in the general recording of oral sources for archival purposes. It may be, however, that they prove practical earlier as a permanent storage medium to which original recordings in magnetic tape can be transferred at major archival centres.

5.1 Recording Tape

The importance of sound quality depends greatly on the uses to which the recordings are to be put. Radio broadcasts require very high quality of sound reproduction. So does musical reproduction, particularly for the human voice in songs and chants. If such use is contemplated, then it is essential that the materials, equipment, and recording conditions be chosen with exceptional care (and usually at considerable expense) to approximate or equal studio conditions. The same is true for television broadcasting, and professional television engineers and camera crews may be required for the production of documentaries that incorporate oral history or oral tradition recordings for broadcasting. Such elaborate care may also be necessary for oral recordings intended for use in museum displays or other public showings.

However, most scholarly and archival recording of oral sources is more important for the information content and the faithful representation of the manner of speaking than for the high fidelity of precise sound range reproduction. Furthermore, the volume of recording required and the resources available to most scholarly and

archival programmes will not permit the high expense of very high fidelity recording, so some compromises must be made at the discretion of programme managers.

Nevertheless, within the bounds of reason, it is important to obtain the best quality feasible. Each reproduction of a recording from one tape to another and indeed each playing back of a recording through sound playback machinery diminishes the quality of the recording in at least some measure, and repeated use can diminish it severely. Therefore, the better the quality of the original recording, and the fewer times it must be played or copied, the more likely that subsequent copies made from the original will be long-lasting and suitable for research.

Rapid recording speeds of at least 3.75 inches per second (9.5 centimeters per second), or preferably 7.5 inches per second (19 centimeters per second), produce better quality sound and less tape "noise" than slower speeds (4.7 cm/sec or 2.4 cm/sec), even though the slower speeds may be tempting because longer periods of oral source interview or recitation may be "captured" on them. Wide tape, at least 0.25 inch in width (about 0.6 cm) and thick tape, about 1.5 mil (0.038 mm) are commonly accepted as optimum standards for tape recording oral sources on audiotape, but the tape in most packaged cassettes is considerably narrower and thinner. The tape base material should be of polyester mylar for maximum strength and durability under various temperature and humidity conditions. These standards may be varied somewhat without significant loss in quality for most purposes, but they are accepted as optimum standards.

Many oral history and oral tradition programmes, however, rely almost entirely on small cassettes in which the tape may be only 3/16 of an inch (about 0.5 cm) and only 0.5 mil (about 0.013 mm) in thickness. This is used for the much greater convenience, lower cost, greater availability, and visual unobtrusiveness of the smaller and more compact tape recorders. There are even extremely tiny "microrecorders" that some interviewers prefer because they can remain almost totally unseen during the interview. The use of such tape, however, greatly compromises the sound quality in reproduction and may cause problems in transcribing, even though the normal human ear seeking to distinguish the information content rather than the precise words and intonations discerns no appreciable difference. If small cassettes must be used as an economic and practical compromise for fieldwork, it is advisable to obtain those of the highest possible quality and shortest playing time tolerable (i.e. the fastest playing speed; about C30 or C45 maximum) so as to obtain the highest possible quality of sound available on cassettes of this sort, and to use high quality machinery for the recording. It is further advised that cassette recordings be transferred to higher quality open reel tape as soon as possible so that a durable archival master tape may be available for producing future reference copies and that the original may be preserved as long as possible in the best possible condition.

5.2 Recording Machinery

As with tape, so with recording equipment most oral recording programmes must make compromises between quality of recording and ease of recording or affordability of equipment at local market prices. Very high quality sound recording is obtained only with large, cumbersome, and expensive equipment. Very small and very convenient recording devices such as micro-recorders produce recordings that may appear adequate to the normal ear but which are actually of inferior quality. Therefore, most programmes use either the larger and more expensive cassette recorders or small open-reel (reel-to-reel) machines that while still portable are larger and heavier than the very small and very inexpensive cassette recorders.

It is also important to use the best microphones that are available and can be afforded in terms of cost. The use of separate microphones for inquirer and respondent (researcher and informant) further improves the opportunity for accurate capture and recording of the spoken voice. Modern technology has produced a number of small and unobtrusive but quite high quality microphones, such as those that clip unobtrusively onto the speaker's clothing so that the voice is readily and accurately sensed by the microphone and converted into electronic impulses for recording on the magnetic tape.

5.3 Video Recording

The same general comments also apply to video recording on magnetic tape. Compromises must be made between image resolution, sound quality, and the convenience and affordability of the equipment employed. Larger, thicker, wider tape, played at higher speeds produces better quality sound and image recording and reproduction in playback. But, videotape recording of high quality requires large and cumbersome equipment. Smaller and more portable equipment that is easy to operate is now being manufactured, and programmes may wish to explore the possibility of adding a videotape dimension to their recording. However, programme managers must carefully calculate the additional value of the visual image to determine if it is worth the added cost. Some programmes avoid videotaping on the suspicion that the addition of visual recording will make the respondents/informers excessively uncomfortable or encourage them to be excessively inventive in their desire to "playact" before the camera. Others feel that at least some sample visual components add considerable value to the sound record.

5.4 Conservation and Preservation of Materials

Although polyester mylar tape is exceedingly durable, care must still be taken to assure its long term survival and to assure the survival of the recording it carries. As noted, duplication and other playback of the tape slowly but inexorably erases the recorded sound images, and every passage of tape through the machinery produces another opportunity for breakage. There-

fore, it is commonly recommended that each original tape be supported by at least two copies. The first copy should be reserved as a "production master" from which future reference tapes should be produced. This first copy and the original should both be retired to separate storage locations. A second copy should be the first reference copy, to be used in transcribing and listening by researchers. In this way, the original tape is reserved as the primary security copy and is never used except in extreme emergency such as total loss of all other copies. The "production master" then becomes the secondary security copy, available for the reproduction of new reference copies as they become deteriorated through use.

Smooth winding at slow speeds produces an even wind and therefore even pressure on all parts of the tape. This reduces the vulnerability of tape to wear over long periods of time, and all security copies should be so wound. It is also advisable that cassette tapes be copied onto open-reel tapes as previously noted.

Care should also be taken in the storage of tapes. Magnetic fields, such as electrical generating equipment and electrical motors should be avoided at all costs. Any magnetic or electrical field of power has the potential of erasing or damaging the sound images recorded on the magnetic tape. Tapes may be stored in their original boxes, although some programmes prefer to purchase acid-neutral boxes. The reels should fit snugly into the boxes so that they do not move about. There is some debate as to whether boxes should be stored flat on shelves or stored upright on their thin ends, the arguments hinging on the relative weight distribution of the tape upon itself in these two positions. If individual tape containers can be separated by shelves so that there is no more than one tape per shelf, then the flat position is probably better. But, the on-end position is prefereable to stacking several tapes one on top of another on an open shelf. The one-tape-per-shelf method requires a shelving configuration that is not very common and most probably must be custom-built. In general, standard archival storage conditions for temperature and humidity are also proper for magnetic tape, which is to say about 65° Farenheit (about 18° Celsius) and about 45% relative humidity for long-term storage, or as close to those standards as may be practical in the local situation. The stability of these conditions is just as important for tape as it is for paper, and wide fluctuations in temperature and humidity increase the rate of deterioration of the physical property of the material.

5.5 Newer Developments

The development of both video analog disks and optical digital disks for storage of sounds and visual images offers some promise for oral source recording in the future, and most of all

for high-volume compact storage and rapid retrieval of particular items through computerized control and access. To date, however, there has been very little application of these to such recording outside of the broadcast industries. Furthermore, the technology in these areas is developing so rapidly that it is probably best for most archival programmes to wait until a general standard is developed and the cost and convenience of the devices has become comparable to those of audio and video cassettes, at least for original recording. There may, however, be a somewhat earlier practical role for this new technology in the mastering and high-volume storage of sound recordings in large archival centres.

5.6 Equipment Problems in the Developing World

It is relatively easy to purchase suitable equipment in the developed world, and collectors of both oral history and oral tradition often have a large range of manufacturers and equipment from which to select the most suitable in cost and purpose for a particular programme. The situation is drastically different in many Third World countries which are not themselves producers of such equipment. It can seldom be bought off the shelf in local stores, particularly not in the degree of quality and reliability required for an archival program, and reliance must be placed on information and catalogues provided by distributors and agents. At times, even when suitable equipment has been identified, chronic shortages of foreign currency may prevent acquisition of the chosen materials.

While the researcher/collector may be fully aware of the type of equipment that best suits his needs, he may be severely handicapped by the limited options at his disposal. His situation is not made any better by the specialized nature of his requirements. Where, for instance, the general consumer may not mind a tape recorder that squeaks and runs somewhat unevenly, that has only a mains (line power) connection and no battery-operation alternative, that is cumbersome, and that plays only small cassettes, the oral traditions collector may find little sympathy for or any interest in his more exacting requirements. He may also be among the very few consumers to need reel-to-reel tape of a particular thickness and base material.

When acquiring equipment there are several broad considerations to keep in mind. It is necessary to purchase equipment that can be repaired and serviced by local technicians or equipment agents and distributors. This means, of course, that the brand of equipment must have local representation. Unfamiliar equipment simply may not be reparable. Sometimes even local agents of a manufacturer and distributor will not carry the full range of spare parts, and there may be delays of weeks or months while replacement parts are ordered and shipped. The worst case is to approach all dealers and repair shops and find none that is prepared even to look at the equipment to assess the damage or cause of malfunction, much less attempt repairs. This is, most

regretably, often the fate of equipment donated by generous and well-meaning overseas donors. When purchasing equipment from abroad it is always well to include an order for a full range of vital spares.

When purchasing equipment from abroad it is also necessary to guard both against outdated technology and technology that is too advanced for effective use and repair. It is not uncommon for manufacturers to consider low-volume markets such as the Third World some form of dumping ground for obsolescent inventory. No sooner is such equipment delivered than the purchaser may be told that it is no longer being manufactured and that spares have become difficult to secure. This may apply to specific models discontinued by reputable manufacturers as well as to companies and lines that have gone out of business entirely or absorbed into a larger firm. More advanced equipment, however glamorous and promising the technical performance, may be worthless because there is no local technical capability for operating it or repairing it. Some of the more recent developments in tape recorders, with automatic sound-sensing and touch-starting devices may be very attractive for oral source recording work, but there may not be anyone in the local area familiar with the inner workings and thus capable of servicing or repairing them. The first symptoms of malfunction might well be the point of complete discard. Such things also happen in isolated instances throughout the developed world, but there are usually alternatives ready to hand whereas there may be none available to the oral tradition collector far from cosmopolitan urban centres.

Imported equipment often sells at prohibitively high prices in the Third World. Those granted the foreign exchange with which to import often wish to derive maximum profit and this often drives the prices of imported goods to astronomic heights, particularly for scarce or unusual commodities where there is an earnest demand and no feasible alternative. Therefore, when equipment is being acquired from overseas, whether through donation or direct order-purchase, it is advisable to identify the brands that have local serviceability and reparability, to include a full range of spares, and then to ask that the donor purchase and send the equipment. This can effect significant savings and thereby permit the acquisition of more and better equipment and supplies.

6.0 ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT OF THE RECORD

6.1 General Archival Concerns

6.1.1 Nature of the Record

It is essential to remember, as noted earlier, that the record produced by the oral history and oral tradition collection process is a recording of an interview or of a narration. It is not, properly speaking, a record of past events, even though those events may be narrated, recited, recollected, reflected upon, examined, and evaluated in the content of the recording. The product indeed may be consulted by historians to seek and find evidence of what took place in the past; but, for archivists "the record" is a record of an interview or narration, or perhaps a conversation among several people, that took place in a time and perhaps in a place well removed from the events discussed or narrated. So long as the archivist managing oral history and oral tradition records maintains this perspective the administration of these records may be orderly and precise. Without it there may well be considerable confusion.

6.1.2 Appraisal of the Record

The archivist must, however, appraise each oral history or oral tradition record on the merits of its contents as well as on provenance, just as must be done with other kinds of records. Standard application of archival judgment as to the intrinsic value of the material and to primary and secondary values, administrative and historical values, evidential and informational values, and enduring or permanent values of an item for future use all must be addressed for oral history and oral tradition materials just as for traditional written records. The earlier discussion of the historiographic context of oral history, found in section 1.0, and the evaluation guidelines, found in section 12.2, may be helpful to archivists in making these judgments.

6.1.3 Provenance of the Record

Oral history and oral tradition records, like all other records, are created by a process, and sound archival management requires an understanding of that process and the provenance of each item accessioned. These records may be created by archival institutions when they deliberately conduct interviews and record oral traditions to supplement or remedy deficiencies in existing archives. They may be created by government agencies as inquiries into their own histories, or as inquiries into the histories of people, places, organizations, functions, or programmes over which they had jurisdiction or responsibility. For instance, some colonial governments conducted extensive inquiries into tribal histories searching for resolutions of tribal boundary and chieftanship disputes. The records may be created by semi-private or private agencies under contract to government agencies for the same purposes. They may be created entirely in the private sector by scholars, educational and research institutions, business

corporations, social and religious institutions and associations, and so on, and these records may at some time be acquired by an archival institution. Each of these kinds of records may be subject to different requirements of administration depending on their provenance and their status under the laws, customs, and political circumstances of the nation in which they were collected and the nation in whose archival institutions they may be deposited. In some cases, archivists may have to deal with records created in one country and deposited in another, or with records shared by two or more countries having common interests in the records. However, archivists have also encountered this problem occasionally in the matter of traditional written records.

6.1.4 Form of the Record

As previously noted, the most common form of an oral source record is a magnetic audiotape, but the archivist may encounter oral sources in any medium capable of reproducing the sounds of spoken voice or representing speech in written words and symbols. Each form of record or medium presents its own requirements and problems for storage, preservation, retrieval, and reference use. Therefore, although it is clearly essential to establish intellectual and administrative control according to provenance of the material, it may also be necessary to establish controls based on the form of the record and its use. A motion picture film with narration in an obscure and unfamiliar language presents a whole different set of requirements from an audiotape in the local language, and must be handled accordingly.

6.1.5 Ownership and Consent

Depending on the laws and customs of the country and culture involved, it may be necessary for the archivist to be sure that ownership rights and rights of use are properly respected. In some countries there is a strong sense of proprietary right of the person interviewed or the person narrating to the intellectual property of his memory and to the formulated response to the collecting inquiry, whether for oral history or oral tradition. In some cultures, memory is integral to personality and to the soul of the individual, and the recording of spoken memoirs for use by others may be considered a kind of spiritual theft. Whether the proprietary rights are grounded in custom, religion, economic property, or law, the archival manager is required to demonstrate that the interview or narration is recorded, acquired, and used in keeping with prevailing requirements of the nation concerned. This requires in many cases establishment and documentation of the voluntary consent of the person interviewed or recorded. In some cases consent may be implied sufficiently in the very act of participation. Other situations may require more sophisticated, elaborate, and formal legal documentation to record an agreement and consent to the process and transfer of material.

6.1.6 Restrictions

Closely related to the issue of proprietary rights is the question of restrictions on use of oral history and oral tradition recordings. For the most part, restrictions on the use of these records are exactly parallel to restrictions on other types of records. It is not uncommon for oral history and oral tradition materials to be restricted entirely or in part for a period of time after being deposited in an archival institution. The restrictions may be imposed by governments as a matter of law or regulation, or perhaps by those interviewed and recorded as a condition of agreement to the recording in the first place. The reasons for restriction normally have to do with personal privacy, mutual confidentiality, or national security. Secrecy of group rites, as in fraternal and religious orders or secret societies may also be involved. Material may also become sensitive overnight in the shifting fortunes of political powers within a country. It is important to the proper administration of oral source materials, as with any other records, that such restrictions be stated explicitly so that management of them may be unambiguously carried out and may be consistent over time. It is preferable that a specific term of months or years be placed on such restrictions whenever possible so that materials may be made available automatically at the end of the term without need for further negotiation. Restricted materials must, of course, be identified clearly and segregated from materials open to research so as to prevent abridgment of restriction agreements and to prevent the damage that might be done to all parties by premature public use.

6.1.7 Arrangement

Since the provenance of oral sources may vary widely, and since their forms may also vary widely, the question of arrangement is an important one. Two common forms of arrangement may be found in most repositories. One is arrangement that is strictly by provenance. That is, no matter what the form of the record, oral history and oral tradition records are kept with and administered together with all other records from the same source. A collection of oral records from one source may, for instance, become a series within that source's record group or fond. A single oral history interview or oral tradition recording may be no more than a folder or file unit within a series, and may be administered exactly like any other records in that group and series.

The second most common form of arrangement is for an archival institution to create a separate sub-archives for all oral history or oral tradition materials, not unlike separate sub-archives often created for photographic materials or "machine-readable" records. The management of one of these sub-archives is more complex than management of the materials by strict provenance arrangement. Within the sub-archives or "oral history collections" the arrangement is often by provenance, and materials from the same source may be grouped into "collections" or "series" within a collection of related oral source materials.

But, arrangement may also be by a master subject classification, not unlike that employed for books in libraries. Indeed, libraries that have acquired oral history materials often treat them as bibliographic items and classify and catalogue them according to the prevailing bibliographic classification system in use. Furthermore, a basic decision must be made at the outset, even though the special sub-archives has been created to hold oral source materials. There still may be cases in which the overwhelming interest of the material lies more properly with a parent fond of other forms of record, and the integrity of the fond may demand that an item or items remain there. When material is removed from its parent fond and placed elsewhere, whether for preservation with similar physical materials or for inclusion in an oral sources sub-archives, it is essential to prepare cross-reference descriptions for placement in both the original file location and in the new location so that intellectual control by provenance can be maintained. The obvious benefit of the alternative of placing all oral sources together in a sub-archives is that they share many of the same problems of storage, preservation, and reference access, so common procedures can be applied to all such materials by one staff skilled in those procedures and the materials can be stored on shelving and in containers most suitable to their preservation and use.

6.1.8 Transcription

Yet another consideration arising out of the issues of form and arrangement is whether the archival institution should maintain oral records solely in their original sound recording form or"found state," or if all such materials should be transcribed into written form like other principal records. The original sound recording is, of course, the best available record of what occurred in the interview or narration, and it must be considered "the record" properly speaking. One school of thought argues that it is the responsibility of the archivist to maintain that original record, and that the archivist should not further interpose interpretive judgment between the record and the future user by transcribing a text from the sound recording. This argument has much to recommend it. Any step away from the original recording must necessarily sacrifice something of accuracy, fidelity, completeness, and evidential value. Not even the most sophisticated and complex system of written language and symbols is sufficient for absolute fidelity to the original recording. Any transcription must necessarily be something of a translation or interpretation.

Nevertheless, there is another school of thought that requires some consideration. If transcription is done shortly after the interview or recording takes place, if the one who transcribes the recording is well-versed in the topics and subjects that are discussed or narrated, and if the participants in the recording have an opportunity to review the transcript and make corrections, then many inevitable errors of ambiguity in the speech recording

may be resolved accurately for the benefit of future scholars. It is not uncommon for several different people to hear quite different words when listening to the same ambiguous passage on a recording. When voices overlap, where background noises intrude, or where the speech characteristics of the speaker are not familiar such differences of interpretation are difficult to resolve. It is also argued, with somewhat less force and conviction, that researchers being accustomed to reading instead of listening will more readily use transcripts than tapes, and that tapes should be maintained primarily for resolving ambiguities and uncertainties discovered in transcript texts.

Still another not insignificant consideration for archival management is that transcription is a slow, labor-intensive, and therefore expensive process. The transcriber must develop a special knowledge and understanding of the matters in an interview so that specialized terminology will be understood and transcribed properly. Extreme accuracy requires many hours of patient listening, writing (or typing), and correction, often by several different people for the same item. Experience shows that not even the most carefully prepared and proofread transcript is without at least some errors or instances where there may be honest differences of opinion about the proper transcription of at least some words and phrases. In some languages, of course, the ambiguity of spoken language is greater than in others, and a transcript may be essential to discern which of two or three identical spoken words is actually intended. The transcription of oral tradition can also present a particularly thorny problem when archaic words or usages are encountered, or when the tradition has reinterpreted earlier forms of the language in conformity with prevailing usages. [Note that in a related phenomenon, social science survey research has discovered that it is not enough to ask the same question repeatedly over time to achieve the basis for comparative analysis because the very meanings and universe of allusions invoked by specific words change over time, so responses later may have very different significance from earlier ones to the same questions.] This may put a higher premium on transcription, or it may convince archival managers to forego transcription altogether because of costs or the difficulty of assuring accurate transcription.

Archival managers must also be wary of the accuracy of transcriptions arriving in their institutions from other sources. Very often transcripts are done for immediate purposes that have little to do with the very high standards of accuracy and fidelity demanded of an archival institution. The source or agency of transcription should always be identified clearly for all such donated materials so that the archival institution holding them is not held responsible for inaccuracies, and so that researchers may themselves judge the significance of transcribed renderings in light of their provenance.

6.1.9 Preservation

Preservation required for oral source recordings depends on the form of record (magnetic tape, paper, phonograph disk, motion picture film, wire recording, videodisk, etc.). [See section 5.4 for specific information on audiotape.] The preservation requirements and methods for these varied forms of oral records are the same as for any other records in the same forms, and the same quality standards should apply. As noted earlier, the better the quality of the original recording, the better will be subsequent reproductions of the record. For this reason, many programmes make two copies of the original tape so that the original may be reserved and not used for further reproduction except in extreme emergencies. Both duplicate copies are made directly from the original, and are as exact and complete reproductions of the original as possible. They are placed on open-reel tape at a fast recording speed, and the tape should meet the specifications detailed in section 5.4 of this study. One of the two copies is reserved as a "production master" and is used primarily to make further reference use copies in the future. The second copy is used as the first reference copy for use in transcription and general public reference. The original tape should be labelled clearly as "ORIGINAL," and it should be removed to a secure storage location separate from the main archives. The production master should be labelled "PRODUCTION MASTER" and the reference copy should be labelled "REFERENCE COPY." They should be stored in separate locations so they will not be mistaken for each other or used interchangeably, and so that if one becomes damaged, the other may survive. Many repositories use compact cassettes for the reference copies because of the greater ease in handling, for their relatively lower cost, and because of the protection of the tape from direct handling. Some minor loss of sound quality must, of course, be expected when cassettes are used.

6.2 Receipt and Administrative Control

If oral history and oral tradition materials are received as an integral part of a major records accession, then they are treated as part of that accession. The standard practices of the repository with respect to accessioning and administrative control should apply.

When repositories undertake their own oral history and oral tradition collecting programmes, however, or when separate sub-archives for oral history or oral tradition materials are established, certain additional records and procedures are required for accessioning and administrative control.

6.2.1 Basic Identification

Both intellectual and administrative control require certain basic elements of identification for each oral history and oral tradition basic unit. The basic unit for oral

history or oral tradition is the interview session or recording session. The basic unit may be simple or complex. Simple units are composed of one audiotape on which one source is recorded at one particular place and time. Complex basic units may consist of several tapes covering one long recording session with the same respondent/informant, or perhaps several sessions with the same respondent/informant on several different occasions for the same project. The basic unit is defined according to provenance by each unique source, but it may be further defined by time and place of recording session and the project for which recording was done. When an individual recording session is recorded on two or more tapes, the same identifying information applies to all tapes from that session. Tapes from different sessions that are recorded at different times and places with the same respondent or informant will vary in their basic identification with respect to date, place, and perhaps interviewer/researcher.

The required elements for basic identification have already been listed in section 4.2.7 ("The Interview Process and the Record") as a responsibility of the interviewer or collector. Unfortunately, records received into an archival institution from other institutions or agencies may lack some or all of the basic information elements. When they do, it is necessary to discover as many of the elements as rapidly as possible for the best chances for good intellectual and administrative control. It is from these basic elements that all other records of receipt and processing can be developed and finding aids developed. Therefore, institutions receiving oral source material from outside agencies should conduct inquiries to learn as many of the elements as possible and as accurately as possible from the creators or creating agency that conducted the project in the first place.

6.2.2 Register of Recordings Received

Since some interviews or oral tradition recordings may be accessioned under their parent record groups, and since some recordings (notably those created by the archival institution itself) are accessioned individually and may not be formally accessioned until processing is completed and a corrected transcript approved for deposit, it is prudent archival management to have a register of recordings received into the institution or oral sources sub-archives. The register is a consecutive record of each interview or recording session brought into the archives, and it is the means by which a receipt serial number or control number is assigned to each item to identify it and track it throughout processing and future use. The register should contain sufficient information to distinguish the recording unit from all others and to provide summary data for reports on receipts and production over time. The form of the register may be quite simple as shown on the following page.

REGISTER OF RECORDINGS RECEIVED (suggested sample form)

Receipt Serial Number	Date of Receipt	Date of Interview/ Recording Session	Name(s) of Respondent(s) and of Interviewer(s)/Researcher(s)
85-ØØ1	28 JAN 85	15 JAN 85	John Smith, by Ralph Sampson
85-ØØ2	30 JAN 85	11 JAN 85	Richard Jones and Mary Jones, by William Brown
85-ØØ3	3 MAR 85	12 FEB 85	James White, by Anna Smith

When the receipt serial number is assigned it should also be recorded on the tape container(s) and in the main file of correspondence previously noted in section 4.2.7. Upon receipt and on completion of the necessary basic information and register entry, each tape received should be placed in a file of tapes awaiting processing. The arrangement of tapes should be in receipt serial number order so the next tape selected for processing is the oldest one in the file. Tapes brought into the oral sources sub-archives from other record groups for processing or permanent administration should be handled in the same manner except that their parent record group, series, and file location should be noted on the tape container and receipt register.

6.3 Processing the Record

There are many degrees of processing that may be applied to oral history and oral tradition record units. For purposes of this study three representative levels have been selected and they are described below, but readers should understand that there are many intermediate levels and that the three levels described are not mutually exclusive. Archivists may choose to process only to the first level described, to the second, to the third, all three, or combinations and intermediate stages between, depending on local requirements and resources. Decisions can be made on the basis of needs of researchers and archivists as well as on economy of local resources.

6.3.1 Preservation Processing and Minimum Description

The basic identification elements provide initial description of each basic record unit, but to be effective they must be complete and of confirmed accuracy. Further, a modest amount of preservation processing should take place and a summary description of the unit information contents is needed before the unit is ready for reference use. The following steps are necessary to

initial preservation and minimal description:

1) The tape or tapes of a single recording session (record unit) must be taken from the file of received tapes and the basic information elements must be checked for accuracy and completeness. Errors and omissions should be corrected at this time if at all possible.

2) The tape is then copied onto two additional tapes (or sets of tapes in the case of multiple-tape units). The best means is through the use of a real-time copier that can produce several copies simultaneously so that there is only one running of the original tape; however, any available means of copying will suffice. Care must be taken to assure that the playback portion of the machinery is not placed in the "RECORD" mode or position so as to avoid erasure (wiping) of the original. When copying is completed, each tape should be identified with the same information that is on the original tape (basic identification elements and receipt serial number, and when appropriate the parent record group identification). The original tape should also be marked "ORIGINAL," and retired to a safe remote storage location. One copy should be labelled "PRODUCTION MASTER" and reserved elsewhere in the archives for use in future copying. The other copy should be marked "REFERENCE COPY" and placed in receipt serial number order in a file of tapes awaiting further processing.

3) The reference copy of the tape or tapes is then listened to and a brief narrative summary of the entire contents of the recording unit is drafted, reviewed, and prepared in approved final copy. In the absence of further processing, this brief summary must stand as the basic finding aid to that particular record unit, so it must be completely representative and yet as concise as possible. The basic identification elements and receipt serial number should be added to this narrative, either as a heading or as an appendix depending on local preference.

The record unit may at this point be considered "processed" through the minimum level necessary for reasonable administrative, intellectual, and reference control. However, it is also necessary at this point to separate those record units having restrictions from those that may be opened to research without restriction. Restricted tapes and summaries should be placed in a separate, secure, storage location within the archives, and their locations should be noted by a reference to the receipt serial number in the main correspondence file and in other processing files and records kept by the institution.

6.3.2 Schedule of Contents

In order to avoid the lengthy delays and high costs of transcription, many oral history and oral tradition programmes prepare a sequential list of topics covered on each tape. This may be a very simple list of topics in the sequential order of their occurrence on the tape, or it may also be keyed to

a time schedule of the playing of the tape to suggest the approximate location of each subject on the tape. In some more sophisticated processing procedures a dual track tape may be used, with a standard time signal entered onto one track while the other track carries the basic recording. 1/ In this way the keying of content descriptions can be more precisely matched to locations on the tapes for ready reference. Of course, a stereophonic (two-track) playback machine is essential to make effective use of this device.

A "schedule of contents" may look like the sample below, although there may be variations depending on local needs and preferences. Again, as with the simple narrative summary, the basic identification elements should be added as a heading or as an appendix to complete the finding aid.

Time	Content Description
00:00:00	No recording; tape lead-in
00:00:25	Recording begins; identification of participants; date, time, and place of recording
00:02:31	Inquiry into family origins, upbringing, and education
00:06:28	College experiences and higher education
00:09:03	Initial interest in ornithology; opportunity to go on expedition to Galapagos Islands
00:13:41	Travel to Australia and Solomon Islands
	. . . etc. . . .

The time in the left-hand column is expressed in hours, minutes, and seconds of elapsed playing time from a specific starting point. When such a schedule is prepared it should be copied and one copy placed with the main case file for that record unit and another copy reserved for use as a finding aid.

6.3.3 Transcription

Transcription is the highest level of processing for sound recordings. It requires highly concentrated, skilled, and patient work to produce a reliable written text that is very faithful to the spoken words as recorded and yet that is very readable. It is much harder to understand speech when one cannot see the speaker and when one is not engaged in direct conversation with that speaker. Dialects, archaisms, changes in voice levels, imperfect pronunciations, interruptions, the overriding of voices speaking simultaneously, background noises, internal machine noise of the recording or playback equipment, poor quality of sound on the tape, and other factors all contribute to frustrate precise

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1/ For detailed instructions on this method see "Oral History, Audio Technology, and the TAPE System" by Dale E. Treleven, in International Journal of Oral History, vol. 2, no. 1, February 1981, pp. 26-45.

and accurate translation of spoken language into written language. Furthermore, spoken language often does not obey the grammatical structure or punctuation of written language, and transcribers must be innovative in sentence structure and paragraphing in order to maintain fidelity to the original and yet maintain readability. The transcriber does not have, however, the freedom of the reporter to comprehend the gist and intent of a statement and to translate what is actually said into what clearly was meant or intended. The transcriber must write down precisely what was said, with little or no interpretation beyond punctuation and paragraphing. The very placement of a comma in a sentence can change the meaning, so a transcriber must be very, very careful.

Therefore, transcribing should not be undertaken unless a programme has the resources to do it well, or unless the ultimate use of the recording absolutely requires a transcript. Moreover, both programme managers and future users must understand that a transcript is actually only a highly sophisticated finding aid to the true record, which is the tape itself.

It is preferable that transcription take place soon after the recording so that participants in the recording may be appealed to for clarification where transcription may be uncertain and the tape itself ambiguous. It is also an advantage if those who do the transcription are themselves well-educated in the topics of discussion so that they recognize and identify and can transcribe properly any specialized terminology and references to obscure names.

The basic process of transcribing appears deceptively simple. A person listens to a tape while simultaneously writing down or typing what is heard, verbatim, including representation of non-verbal exclamations and interjections, notations of intrusions, laughter, coughing, sneezing, and so forth. Occasionally, when there is something like music on the tape in the midst of a narrative recitation, the transcriber may have to identify the tune or the song being sung, or perhaps to annotate its tune by title or analogy rather than in musical notes. Most transcription is done in typewritten copy, but some more sophisticated programmes are beginning to use electronic word processors (personal or small business computers) because of the capability of making corrections rapidly before print-out copy is prepared.

Since transcription is an uncertain process, each draft transcript should be reviewed by at least one person other than the transcriber. Difficult recordings may require several reviews. The reviewer (or "editor") is actually a proofreader who listens to the tape and makes corrections to the draft transcript in order to make it as faithful a representation of the spoken words as possible. When this review is completed, the transcript must be identified with the basic identification elements for that record unit, including the receipt serial number and the identification of the parent record group where appropriate.

6.4 Tape or Transcript Review

6.4.1 Oral History

Many oral history programmes offer the people who have been interviewed an opportunity to review the tape or transcript prior to formal donation of the item and accessioning into the archives. There are several reasons offered to justify this policy. The person interviewed may have insisted on the right of review as a condition of agreement to being interviewed. There may be omissions in the interview that the respondent, upon further reflection, may want to add as an appendix or in follow-up interviewing. There may be transcriber errors, ambiguities, or omissions in a transcript that the respondent may be able to correct or remedy. It is also believed to offer the respondent an opportunity to be more thoughtful and complete about the quality and validity of the testimony presented in the record.

Some who practice oral history are vigorously opposed to this practice. They insist that the integrity of the original record is important and that it is compromised by any such review since the respondent may wish to revise objectionable or unfelicitous parts. Some people, also, are appalled at the peculiar quality of their spoken composition because it compares so unfavorably with carefully crafted written prose, and this may sour them on the whole process of oral history and discourage further cooperation with the programme.

There is also some difference of opinion among oral historians about the corrected transcript. Some programmes retype the transcript entirely, incorporating the respondent's corrections. Others maintain the first typewritten transcript with the handwritten changes of the respondent. History and total accuracy doubtless argue for the latter as the preferable document, and archivists would agree that such an item is the best written record of the meaning and intent of the respondent. It permits the reader of a transcript to discover places of ambiguity or uncertainty and to concentrate attention on those areas in listening to the audiotape for better understanding and interpretation.

6.4.2 Oral Tradition

Oral traditions are sometimes recorded in remote villages and often among people for whom a transcript review would be meaningless. It may also be that at the end of a field trip there is little prospect of returning to the area of recording. In such cases it becomes imperative to review the recording soon after the recording has taken place and to thrash out with informants any ambiguities, archaisms, or points of detail. As these corrections and emendations will likely be in the form of written notes by the researcher/collector, they should form part of the record and be

explanatory to the tape recording as well as to any transcript of the recording.

6.5 Accessioning

By commonly accepted archival standards, accessioning is the act of achieving both physical custody and legal dominion and control over records so that the archival institution becomes not only keeper but also owner, administrator, and arbiter of use of the materials acquired. In oral history and oral tradition materials, as may be the case with certain other records and often is with personal manuscripts taken into an archival institution, accessioning may be conditional. The institution may agree, as a condition of acquiring the material, to administer it according to certain laws and regulations of the parent government or agency of origin, or to terms and conditions expressed by the agency, institution, or person that transferred the materials to the repository for permanent deposit and administration. As noted previously, when oral source material is brought into an archival institution as an integral part of a record group that includes a variety of kinds of materials, the accessioning of the whole incoming body of material covers all its parts, including the oral material, and no further accessioning action should be required unless there is uncertainty about the transferring agency's rights and title to the material in the first place.

When oral recordings are acquired independently of other transfers or donations, as in cases where archival institutions themselves do the interviewing or recording, acquiring the material consists of two quite separate acts. One is the physical acquisition of the real property of the recorded tape. This is done by accomplishing the recording by an employee of the archival institution and the return of the tape to that institution for deposit and processing. The second step is an agreement between the person or persons recorded and the institution, in which formal donation of the intellectual content of the recording is documented. This transfer agreement varies widely in character and practice. It may be a relatively simple act, incorporated orally into the recording itself, in which the intent to donate is spoken and recorded at the beginning or end of the interview or narration. However, it may be that local customs or laws may require a much more formal documentation such as a written deed to establish the donation of both real and intangible property to the institution.

In any case, the prudent archival manager must be satisfied that the institution is fully entitled to exercise control over the recording before it is accessioned. The accessioning may be conditional, as noted, and a condition of accessioning may require seal or restriction of the recording, or parts of it, for a time according to law or to the wishes of the respondent. But, so long as the conditions are clear and according to local law, they should not impede accessioning.

Once documentation of the transfer is established satisfactorily, the material may be added to the regular accession register of the institution, just like any other accession. Normally, all recording sessions with one person or from one source are accessioned as a unit by provenance. Therefore, a single accession may be represented by several receipt serial numbers in the records of the institution. If a group of recordings collected by another agency is brought into the archives under a single transfer agreement, all those interviews or recordings should be regarded as one accession, even though there might be many individual interviews or recordings in the whole body of material received.

It should also be mentioned that when oral tradition material is recorded, the informants may be unable to comprehend the issues of intellectual ownership and content as distinct from the physical property of the recording. It may be and often is assumed that consent to record implies donation of both the physical property (where appropriate) and the intellectual content to the person doing the recording or to the institution sponsoring the project. In practice, this issue is rarely raised with oral tradition informants. However, there have been occasions on which well-organized and relatively sophisticated ethnic groups, realizing the benefits that may accrue to the group producing the oral tradition for the record, require that any proceeds from the sales of books or other works dependent upon the recording should be shared in by the group or by its representative council or other responsible agency acting for the group.

7.0 FINDING AIDS AND ACCESS

7.1 Basic Identification

Any discussion of finding aids and access to oral history and oral tradition records must begin with knowledge of the basic identifying elements previously noted in section 4.2.7, and with understanding that these basic identifying elements apply to the basic record unit, an interview recording or the recording of a recitation or other oral tradition form. To these basic identifying elements must be added some further information and identifying elements for full description of each basic record unit:

1) the name or title of the repository having custody of the material;

2) the programme under whose authority the recording was performed (if not already noted);

3) the project or collection title to which the recording belongs (which is some cases may be a parent record group and series);

4) the sub-collection or sub-series to which the recording belongs (if any);

5) the location of the audiotape or other recording, original and copies;

6) the location of any transcripts, and the length of transcript in pages;

7) the existence or absence of any restrictions on the research use of the material, giving details as to terms of restrictions and appeal process (if any).

Each of these kinds of information must be available at least to collection managers for effective management and informed access to the materials in custody. Whenever possible, this information should be provided to researchers in any guides or catalogues to the oral source materials. The final element in the definitive identification (or description) of the record unit is the summary or schedule of contents. Any further description and development of finding aids must rest on having first established these elements.

In some repositories there may be additional numerical codes assigned to collections, record groups, series, or even to individual record units. In such cases, these additional codings and their rational pattern may be required for accurate and complete retrieval of individual units, and therefore should be included in finding aids.

7.2 Finding Aids Based on Record Groups

When a recording is already an integral part of an existing record group, it becomes merely an additional unit in that record group and is described along with the normal description process for the whole group and the series in which it happens to be located, just as for any other file unit within the series. If the item has been removed from the parent record group and put in a collection of oral source materials, there must be at least a cross-reference to the artificial location in both the original file location and in the finding aid to that group. The short method of identifying an oral source unit for this purpose is usually by the name of the person recorded and the date of the recording, although other identification elements may be added as needed to resolve ambiguities and confusion.

7.3 The Oral Documentation Collection or Oral Sources Archive

In some repositories, as has been noted, oral history and oral tradition materials are collected together, perhaps from many origins or perhaps solely from the repository's own recording work, or perhaps both, into an artificial collection of all oral source documents. This may be called an oral history collection, an oral documentation collection, an oral tradition collection, or in some cases (rather imperfectly) an oral history or oral sources archive. In general, oral tradition collections are organised under the term "oral history." They tend to be distinguished from other forms of oral sources only in specialised institutions.

7.3.1 Oral History Materials

The most common finding aid to an oral history collection is a simple, alphabetic list of all the individual interviews within the collection by name of respondent (interviewee). Each entry in the list may be augmented by the date of the interview and such other elements from the list of basic identifiers as managers feel may be required for proper and adequate identification and reference by researchers. In some catalogues each entry even includes a brief precis of the contents, a date-span of the events covered, or some biographic data on the respondent.

When a collection comes from several sources or was developed from the product of several different projects, each source or project may be represented as a separate sub-collection. These are arranged in sub-collection order in the catalogue, with each sub-collection having its own unique alphabetic list of component interviews, arranged by name of respondent.

It is not unknown, but not very common, for a repository to prepare its finding aid in the numerical order of serial code numbers assigned to collections or record groups (and perhaps also to their constituent series or units) even though this method presents the most difficulty to the average user.

The basic list (or "guide" or "catalogue") may be used by staff, researchers, or both to search for likely items pertaining to a topic of research. In the absence of indexing of contents, this form of finding aid requires that the researcher be able to make a correct identification of appropriate material through knowledge of the people on the list and their roles in the history being studied. The user must search the list of names of respondents until he finds those recognised as associated with the topic of research, and then he must search each of those individual interviews to find material useful to his study.

7.3.2 Oral Tradition Materials

Oral traditions within oral history archives may be separate identifiable units or may be organised in the same way as oral history interviews and identifiable as traditions only through the tables of contents and indices. Where they are a distinct entity, they may be divided into the various categories of oral traditions, such as by the typology proposed by Vansina, or they may merely be identified by the name of the informant or the name of the locality or society of the recording. From responses received to a questionnaire on archives and oral tradition [see section 10.0], only specialised institutions such as archives of folklore societies or audiovisual archives try to distinguish between the various types of traditions.

7.4 Cross-Reference Indexing

Although cross-reference indexing by subject is not all that common to archives in general it is becoming more so, and keepers of oral history and oral tradition materials have also done a good deal of experimenting with various forms of name and subject or "key-word" indexing across individual record units and across collections and sub-collections.

7.4.1 The Summary or Schedule of Contents Indexing Mathod

One method of preparing a cross-reference index to oral record units is to prepare a list of key words, names and subjects, drawn from the brief descriptive summaries or schedules of contents that serve as finding aids to individual recording units. These terms are then arranged in alphabetic order and keyed to brief identifications of the recordings in which they appear as topics. Identification of the pertinent recordings may be by serial number, name of person interviewed or recorded, or other pertinent identifier. Where necessary, collection or record group may also be indicated. This method can produce a master index to key terms in all summaries and schedules across an entire collection. If completely and accurately done, it is a great help in locating pertinent material; however, it is produced only with a good deal of time and effort and careful attention to synonyms and to the appropriate hierarchical relationships among terms.

7.4.2 The Item Indexing Method

Some programmes prepare individual name and subject indices for each oral history interview or oral tradition recording. At the end of each transcript (or in a separate file if transcripts are not prepared) there is placed an alphabetic name and subject index of all significant terms appearing in that transcript text or spoken in that recording, together with a reference to a page number or perhaps a time location on the tape where the term may be found in context. These item indexing methods are much more expensive and time-consuming than the summary indexing method. They also require much more sophisticated index terms control in authority lists to avoid confusion. Moreover, the time and care required to index a sound tape that lacks a written transcript is very much greater than that required for indexing transcripts.

Some repositories that have already prepared individual indices to each recording may combine the terms and references of the individual indices into a master, consolidated index for the entire collection or archive. Obviously, this puts an additional cost burden on repository resources and it should not be attempted unless it can be sustained over a long period of time. Automated data processing methods and equipment raise hopes that detailed work of this sort may be done at greatly reduced costs and in greatly reduced time, but the repository must be able to make a substantial initial investment in the hardware and software required. When automated word processors and small computers are used for transcribing, for instance, it is possible to produce an index for each transcript automatically by matching the transcript text with a master authority list of terms already established in the computer memory. In such cases, software programmes must be added to identify new terms not already in the authority list so programme managers may decide if these new terms should be added to the master list.

7.5 Bibliographic Models

Just as some archives and manuscript collections employ a bibliographic cataloguing system to identify and locate record units, so this method may also be applied to oral history and oral tradition records. Record units may be given classifications and "call numbers" by librarians just as if they were bound volumes. Indeed, in some library collections the units are bound so that they will stand on shelves, will look like, and will be handled exactly as books. Record units may also be loosely grouped together into sub-collections to which the basic finding aid may be a catalogue card arranged alphabetically by name of collection and interfiled among other bibliographic catalogue cards. Similarly, as advances in automated data processing and machine cataloguing are developed, these items make the transition to automated databases exactly like their bibliographic counterparts, the published books.

7.6 Cross-Repository Finding Aids

Several attempts have been made to compile master catalogues of both oral history and oral tradition materials in given geographic areas. Like many other attempts to do the same sort of thing with archives and manuscript collections, such catalogues are difficult to compile, often incomplete, and very difficult to maintain in a current, up-to-date fashion. They also suffer from the same short-coming as many national and regional catalogues to archives and manuscript collections in that they lack a topical guide for the researcher seeking all possible sources for his research subject.

With the advent of standardised machine-readable cataloguing formats for archives and manuscript collections, and with the coming development of inter-institutional data sharing networks, the initial cataloguing and updating of information across broad geographic areas and among many institutions should become possible, although it is presently in its early stages and will require much training and investment in hardware and software systems. This development, inevitably, will include oral history and oral tradition materials, and this may require some slight modifications of the uses of various standardised line entries of "fields" in these systems. Archival managers should be able to adapt the basic oral recording identification elements to the new formats and vice-versa. At some future date, perhaps, oral history and oral tradition access data and summary descriptions, like archival and bibliographic access data, may be interchangeable across oceans and continents among the many countries of the world.

8.0 ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

There are a number of ethical and legal issues that many archivists must face in administering oral history and oral tradition materials, no matter what form of government the archivist may serve. The form of government may dictate the appropriate response and procedures in particular cases within a framework of national customs and laws, but the issues must be faced and problems resolved by the archivist. Some will be handled more easily than others, by some archivists more easily than others, and in some societies more easily than others, but they still are issues to be handled.

8.1 Authenticity

As with any other record in an archives, the mere fact of its presence in an archives asserts that the record is exactly what it purports to be, and that the archival institution keeping the record assures the reader or listener of this authenticity, in part by a continuous chain of custody and in part by expert appraisal of the record. For oral history and oral tradition records created by the archival institution itself, the chain of custody is relatively easy to establish, maintain, and demonstrate in the records of actions taken to acquire and process each interview or recording, and the institution may comfortably certify the provenance and integrity of the item. For oral history and oral tradition records created by other agencies, the repository must either accept or challenge the assertions of the transferring agency with respect to the character and integrity and provenance of the material transferred. The test at this point is not whether the testimony provided in the recording is accurate or not, but rather whether the interview or recorded narration did indeed take place among the people represented as participants at the time and place indicated on the record. This may have to be established through examination of the transferring agency's own records of creation and processing and/or an analysis of the voices and nature of the recording as it plays back to an expert. There is a rather nice point here as to whether the responsibility of the archivist is to establish and certify the authenticity of the record or merely to certify that the record was transferred by a particular agency which represented the recording as an authentic item as described. The main point is that archivists must not accept items uncritically even if they cannot perforce establish unquestionable authenticity in every case.

8.2 Integrity of the Record

Two issues arise with respect to the integrity of the record. First, is the record as presented to the repository and subsequently to researchers the whole record as it was originally created? If not, are there justifiable reasons why it is incomplete? Are deletions and the justifications for those deletions conveyed reasonably and understandably to archival managers and then to researchers? Practice, of course, is dictated by local customs and laws, but the issue and its effect remain the same

whatever the situation. If a user is not informed of missing segments of a record, and if the reasons for justifiable deletions are not made clear, then the user will analyse the data on the basis of a false assumption of completeness, and conclusions may prove erroneous if drawn from that analysis. It is important to accuracy of historical analysis that the integrity of records used as evidence in that analysis be assured, or at least that imperfections in the evidence be accounted for. If the archival manager values the validity of conclusions drawn by users of records, including oral history and oral tradition materials, then he must take care to assure the integrity of the records themselves.

The second issue is the real value of the contents. Nothing can destroy an oral sources programme so quickly as a hoax or a mass of trivia lacking in historical value. The archivist must not be uncritical in acceptance of all oral source materials offered. He must appraise the content value of oral sources just as he would that of written sources, and must recommend acceptance into the archives, retention of the materials, or appropriate disposition of the records based on their legal, administrative, evidential, historical, and informational values. If he must, as a dutiful archivist, accession materials known to be flawed, he should understand the reasons for this and should do what can be done to make a record of his appraisal of the material so that future managers and users will be able to understand the situation and not accept the material uncritically.

8.3 Property

An oral history recording or an oral tradition has both physical and intellectual property: the physical property of the record (tape, paper, film, etc.); and the intellectual property of the information contents and their formulation or composition (which may also have artistic dimensions). Local laws and customs govern ownership, disposition, and transfer rights and procedures for each form and dictate the formalities that may have to attend each. In some cases, voluntary participation may be sufficient to establish transfer of both physical and intellectual property. In others, elaborate legal formalities may be required. Ethically, too, customs vary widely. As noted previously, in some cultures memory of an individual is considered an integral part of his physical and spiritual being and must not be taken from him without explict consent and perhaps not without elaborate ceremony. In others, no such moral impediment exists, and memory may be shared freely without condition or penalty. Sometimes, within the same country and under the same government there are contradictory customs. American journalists use oral interviews without obligation to the people they interview, but orally-dictated reflections and memoirs may be copyrighted by the originators just as written books may be so protected.

Some argue that oral history should have the same presumptive authority to publish interviews without obligation to those

interviewed as do journalists in some countries. This view argues that any voluntary participation in an interview is tacit release of any rights, title, interest, or other reservations regarding the interview contents and use. Opponents of this view argue that such a policy will inevitably induce wariness, suspicion, and prevarication on the part of those interviewed, as is often the case in press interviews. Candor being of extremely high value to oral history, protection of the rights and interests of those interviewed is one way of encouraging candor.

8.4 Libel, Slander, and Character Defamation

False statements, libel, slander, and defamation of character may occur in the context of oral records just as they may occur in any other record or human communication. The temptation of the speaker to enhance his own role and to belittle or even abuse the achievements and qualities of others is the same in oral history as it is for any other memoirs or advocacy debates. However, the degree to which the archival institution is itself a participant in the creation of an oral history record (which does not happen normally with ordinary records transferred from other agencies) infers a responsibility for false statements and an advocacy role may be imputed to the archival institution where none was originally intended. Laws providing specific penalties for specific instances of libel and slander vary widely, but the opprobrium that may attach to an archival institution perceived as being party to such defamatory activity transcends legal niceties. Archival managers must be aware of this and be prepared to deal with it as their own particular laws, culture, and local political situation may dictate in the interests of preservation of a valid historical record.

8.5 Security of the Record

There are two security issues for oral history. One is the issue of national security. The other is security against premature disclosure of matters intended by originators to be confidential for reasons of privacy, sensitivity, or mutual respect. State secrets may be contained in an oral history record, and the archival manager must handle such interviews in accordance with the laws of his country for protecting national security. Security required to protect personal information, business information, or politically sensitive information from premature disclosure is normally the subject of conditional restrictions imposed by an interviewee (respondent) at the time of an interview or deposit agreement. When such agreements exist, archival managers are obliged to honor the restrictions until their terms expire or they are abrogated by the originators or due process of law. Premature release of information conveyed in confidence for which the archival institution has assumed an obligation of security may jeopardize

future cooperation and candor on the part of potential oral history participants. Not only must archival managers examine such restrictions in relation to the information being received and decide whether or not they are capable of honoring the restrictions sought by the respondent, but they must also segregate the restricted material once the restrictions have been accepted, and all access (by staff or others) must be strictly accounted for.

9.0 USES OF ORAL HISTORY AND ORAL TRADITION

9.1 Oral History

A leading exponent of oral history, the late Louis Starr of Columbia University, once observed that oral history "is more than a tool and less than a discipline." /1 It may be more aptly described, perhaps, as a technique in the service of many disciplines employing deliberate recorded inquiry and responses that are historical in focus and scope. This covers a very broad range of activity that transcends not only history into other academic disciplines but also transcends academic disciplines themselves. The technique may be applied in the service of journalism or other professions that are more of the occupational and practical world than the academic world. Therefore, it should not be surprising that the uses of oral history are myriad, perhaps increasing thereby the historian's doubt of its benefits for academic historical research and analysis. If something is so broadly useful, then how can it possibly be raised to the level of art and technique required of the professional historian? The answer is that it is not the nature of the technique (recorded inquiry and response) but rather the quality of its practice and the uses to which it is put that make it useful or not to the writing of history.

The basic use of oral history sources remains the writing of history, or the preparation of multi-media documentary histories employing visual and sound images as well as written exposition and analysis to convey both the facts and the significance of the past to modern and future readers or listeners and viewers. Much oral history is collected and stored up in archives to serve just that purpose. Still more may be gathered and distilled for just one project or publication but never wind up in any documentary repository. Historians and graduate students in history make extensive use of recorded interviews to supplement the extant and surviving records, artifacts, photographs, and works of art upon which historians have traditionally based their research.

Yet, through popularity of the term, through the convenience of the technique and its equipment, "oral history" is being applied in ways that historians perhaps never dreamt. It is used as a technique to improve the outlook of despondent elder citizens who have become infirm and feel useless in society except as sources of memory about the past. At the other end of the generational scale it is being used as a teaching device to help school children learn more about their families and communities, and incidentally to introduce them to some of the more dif-

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1/ Louis Starr, "Oral History," in Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences, vol. 20, pp. 440-463. (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1977)

ficult problems of basic epistemology, the search for truth on an immediate and personal plane, as a juvenile mirror of the more sophisticated and profound researches of their academic seniors. It is used to collect and preserve folktales, folklore, and artisan skills that might otherwise become lost amid the rapid advances of developing technology. It is used to produce highly impressionistic descriptions of recent events, places, people, and other phenomena through the deft interweaving of personal testimony in quotations with expositional narrative. It is used, similarly, in film and television documentaries like the celebrated French film, The Sorrow and the Pity, by Marcel Ophuls, and the British Broadcasting Company's more recent series of programs, Vietnam: Many Reasons Why.

Oral history is also used by communities, both geographic and ethnic or economic, to establish or to broaden a recorded account of the local past, much after the fashion of oral traditions being captured to form the nucleus of archives in emergent nations. Labor unions and business corporations, churches and universities, government archives and private manuscript collections and libraries, all have considered oral history, and many have experimented with this technique of supplementing written sources.

The product of oral history, chiefly in sound recordings, finds its way into illustrated lectures and even into advertising. In such cases there is little attempt to distinguish between oral history as deliberate research and collection of spoken memory and the "oral history" which consists of surviving sound recordings of human events involving speech, such as political debates or broadcast reports of national and international events. As noted earlier, written versions of oral history may still be called "oral history" when appearing in published books, some of which may be largely fictitious although perhaps fairly representative of a culture or a time in their spirit and characterisations.

This, then, is the broader context in which the archivist encounters oral history. There are records suitable for archives among all the many guises in which oral history may appear. The task of the archivist, among others, is to identify them, appraise their lasting value, accession them, preserve them, arrange and describe them, and provide reference service from them, just as for any other records.

9.2 Oral Tradition

Oral tradition, like oral history, has a variety of uses. While controversy may rage as to its validity, reliability, authenticity, and usefulness, it must nevertheless be considered as one of the basic sources for the writing of history. As with oral history, it is being used to broaden recorded accounts of the identities and pasts of communities and for other purposes such as

film documentaries and illustrated lectures.

Oral tradition is acknowledged to have a paramount value in those societies which have become literate only in recent times, and where, therefore, the history and culture of the societies have had to be transmitted through the generations by word of mouth. In societies which have been literate for a long time, oral tradition is still useful in documenting those aspects that were never recorded on paper. No written documentation can ever be fully reflective of every facet of society. Certain aspects will always remain undocumented. Oral tradition is thus useful in filling the gaps that are bound to exist within the written documentary record.

Countries that for long periods of their history have been under the dominion of a foreign power place a high value on their oral tradition once they attain independence and nationhood. As noted earlier, such countries consider that they inherited a documentary record that is incomplete and imbalanced, that was meant to be no more than a catalogue of the life and deeds of the colonial masters. Oral tradition is therefore seen as an answer to a reconstruction of the history and culture of the indigenous population. The gathering of the traditions is also seen as urgent in view of the rapid changes taking place in those countries as well as because of the ongoing disappearance through death of those who have been well-versed in the traditions.

The very act of recording is however transforming oral traditions. Once recorded they can no longer be considered as purely and exclusively oral forms. The indigenous oral form may become influenced by the recorded and perhaps written forms of the same or similar traditions. Some claimants in chieftainship disputes have invoked the written transcripts of oral genealogies collected by oral historians, claiming that the written forms should be considered superior to the surviving oral forms. Oral traditions will continue to exist, however, because even where there are records, not everyone can have access to the written record. Of necessity, a great deal will continue to be transmitted by word of mouth.

10.0 SURVEY OF ARCHIVES AND ORAL TRADITION

In November 1984, a questionnaire on "Archives and Oral Tradition" was sent out to all category A and B members of the International Council on Archives and to certain other institutions known to be involved with oral tradition and/or oral history. One hundred and eighty questionnaires were distributed and eighty-five responses were received. The primary thrust of the questionnaire was on oral tradition, but it also touched on oral history. In analysing the responses received, it must be pointed out that the majority of those who answered negatively to involvement with both oral history and oral tradition did not then go on to answer any of the other questions. Therefore, the statistics cited below in the analysis come from the forty-seven institutions that responded to most, if not all, of the questions asked.

10.1 Extent of Archival Involvement with Oral Sources

Below is a list of the institutions that responded to the questionnaire, together with an indication of each institution's involvement with oral history or oral tradition. "Yes" indicates institutions that affirmed involvement with either oral history or oral tradition. "No" indicates a response of no involvement. Where respondents affirmed only involvement with oral history and did not respond to the oral tradition inquiry, this has been understood to mean negative involvement with oral tradition.

The number of years given is the length of time that the institution has been involved with oral sources. As can be seen from the list, twice as many institutions are involved with oral history as with oral tradition. It must be pointed out, however, that the term "oral history" has assumed an all-embracing connotation, and much oral tradition work is carried on under the guise of oral history. One third of the institutions involved with either oral history or oral tradition said that they did not draw a distinction between the two.

Country	Institution	Oral Hist.	Oral Trad.	Years
AUSTRALIA	Public Record Office, Victoria	NO	NO	--
	La Trobe University	YES	YES	10
	State Library Service, Western Australia	YES	YES	23
	Oral History Association	--	--	--
	Aboriginal History	--	--	--
	Australian Archives	YES	NO	18
AUSTRIA	Osterreischisches Staatsarchiv	NO	NO	--
BAHAMAS	Department of Archives	YES	NO	14
BARBADOS	Department of Archives	YES	NO	--
	University of West Indies	YES	NO	7

Country	Institution	Oral Hist.	Oral Trad.	Years
BELGIUM	Archives Generales du Royaume	NO	NO	--
BENIN	Direction des Archives Nationales	NO	NO	--
BERMUDA	Bermuda Archives	YES	YES	10
BOTSWANA	National Archives	YES	YES	3
BRAZIL	National Archives	NO	NO	--
CANADA	Public Archives of Canada	YES	YES	15
	Provincial Archives of Alberta	YES	YES	19
	Simon Fraser University Archives	YES	YES	15
	Sound and Moving Image Division, British Columbia	YES	YES	11
	Archives Nationales du Quebec	YES	YES	--
CHILE	Archivo Nacional	NO	NO	--
CHINA	Arquivo Historico de Macau	NO	NO	--
COSTA RICA	Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica	NO	NO	--
CYPRUS	Public Record Office	NO	NO	--
CZECHOSLO-VAKIA	Administration of Archives	NO	NO	--
DENMARK	National Archives	NO	NO	--
EIRE	Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin	YES	YES	49
	Public Record Office	YES	YES	--
	Department of Irish Folklore	--	--	--
FAROE ISLANDS		YES	NO	29
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden	NO	NO	--
	Landesarchiv, Berlin	YES	NO	4
	Landesarchiv, Schleswig-Holstein	NO	NO	--
	Landesarchiv, Saarbrucken	NO	NO	--
	Landesarchivdirektion, Baden-Wuttemberg	NO	NO	--
	Archivverwaltung des Landes Niedersaschen, Hanover	NO	NO	--
	Staatsarchiv, Bremen	NO	NO	--
FINLAND	Folklore Archives of the Society of Finnish Folklore	YES	YES	149[SIC]
	National Archives	YES	NO	--
FRANCE	Archives Nationales	YES	NO	4
	Institut d'Histoire du Temps Presents	YES	NO	4

Country	Institution	Oral Hist.	Oral Trad.	Years
GREECE	Archives Generales d'Etat	NO	NO	--
INDIA	Gujarat State Archives	YES	NO	2
	Karnataka State Archives	NO	NO	--
INDONESIA	National Archives	YES	NO	12
ISRAEL	State Archives	YES	NO	30
ITALY	Secret Vatican Archive	NO	NO	--
JAPAN	National Archives	NO	NO	--
MALAGASY	Archives Nationales	NO	NO	--
MALAYSIA	National Archives	YES	NO	20
NEPAL	National Archives	NO	NO	--
NETHERLANDS	Algemeen Rijksarchief	NO	NO	--
	Historisch Seminarium, University of Amsterdam	YES	NO	9
NEW ZEALAND	National Archives	NO	NO	--
	New Zealand Oral History Archive	YES	YES	4
	Radio New Zealand Sound Archives	YES	YES	40
NORWAY	Riksarkivet	NO	NO	--
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	National Archives	NO	NO	--
PERU	Archivo General dela Nacion	NO	NO	--
POLAND	Archiwow Panstwowych	YES	NO	--
QATAR	Archives and Studies Section	NO	NO	--
SAUDI ARABIA	Institute of Public Administration	NO	NO	--
SENEGAL	Direction des Archives du Seneqal	YES	YES	--
SEYCHELLES	Archives and Museum Division	YES	YES	5
SINGAPORE	Archives and Oral History Department	YES	NO	5
SOLOMON ISLANDS	National Archives	YES	YES	--
	National Museum	YES	YES	15
SPAIN	Subdirecion General de Archivos	NO	NO	--
SRI LANKA	National Archives	YES	YES	10
SUDAN	National Records Office	YES	NO	14
SWAZILAND	National Archives	NO	NO	--

Country	Institution	Oral Hist.	Oral Trad.	Years
SWEDEN	National Archives	YES	NO	10
UNITED KINGDOM	Public Record Office	NO	NO	--
	Public Record Office, Northern Ireland	YES	NO	--
	India Office Library & Records	YES	NO	10
	University of Manchester	YES	NO	15
	British Library National Sound Archive	YES	YES	36
	Imperial War Museum	YES	YES	12
	Scottish Record Office	YES	NO	10
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	National Archives & Records Administration	YES	NO	12
	Columbia University Oral History Research Office	YES	NO	36
	Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music	YES	YES	36
	Smithsonian Institution Archives	YES	YES	11
YUGOSLAVIA	Archive Jugoslavije	NO	NO	--
ZIMBABWE	National Archives	YES	YES	16

10.2 Oral History and Oral Tradition as Archival Functions

Among the respondents there is a general consensus that oral history and oral tradition are indeed legitimate concerns of the archivist. Forty-four of the forty-seven respondents involved approved this role and only three opposed it; but, this affirmation is primarily an endorsement of the archivist's traditional role as accessioner, preserver, and availer of material generated and accumulated by others. There was significantly more resistance to the archivist's involvement in the recording process, with seventeen opposed to such a role compared to thirty-one who were agreeable to it.

Those opposed to the archivist's involvement in the actual recording of oral history and oral tradition argued that the archivist did not have the requisite skills, that his impartiality in custodianship was compromised, and that it was "criminal" to dabble in such activity when funds were so scarce and many traditional archival tasks remained unaccomplished. The proponents of such involvement admitted that the archivist must only undertake this activity if he has the means and that it must not be at the expense of his customary duties. They argued, however, that the archivist is often a historian by training, that in any case he can be trained satisfactorily to interview and record, and that

his handling of other source materials places him in a unique position to assess the areas requiring documentation. It is further asserted that when no other agency is recording oral history and oral traditions, it may be imperative for the archival centre to take the initiative in oral tradition collection. It must also be noted that there are now in existence specialised archives set up for this purpose, whose personnel are equally conversant with archival techniques and the recording of oral sources.

It is interesting to note that involvement in oral history and oral tradition can also have spin-off benefits for traditional archival activities. Oral history and oral tradition materials can come to an archives centre accompanied by the personal papers of those interviewed. As oral historians scour the country for oral traditions, they also come across valuable documents which then may end up in the archives. This activity can also publicise the work of the archives centre and thus generate both sympathy and enthusiasm for its programmes. Such public relations work can lead to increased support for the institution.

10.3 Oral Tradition as an Archival Resource

There was almost universal agreement among the positive respondents that oral tradition is a valuable cultural and historical resource and that it has a value in societies with written tradition as well as those without. Oral tradition is seen as complementary to other archival holdings, usable for research, publication, broadcasting, drama, and literature. In societies with written tradition, it can be the means for verifying written records. In Scotland, for instance, oral tradition has proved more reliable than written tradition in locating positions of sunken ships.

While basically there was concurrence on some degree of reliability of oral tradition, there was wide divergence of opinion on the extent of this reliability. At one end are those who view oral traditions as completely reliable and no different nor less reliable than other historical sources. Occupying a middle position are those who see oral traditions as reliable within certain limits, subject, for instance, to authentication by written and other sources, or dependent on the quality of the person recording, on the recording situation, and on the quality and motivation of the informant. At the other end of the scale were a tiny minority who very grudgingly gave oral traditions any credence at all, and imposed massive conditions for their acceptance.

10.4 The Typology of Oral Tradition

From responses to a request to indicate the varieties of oral tradition represented within collections, using Vansina's typology [see section 3.2], it is clear that while many respondents distinguish between oral history and oral tradition, not many take the further step of categorising traditions in their custody or distinguishing among the various types. This may be partly a

reflection of the predominance of oral history over oral tradition, in that traditions are perhaps considered under the oral history umbrella, but this lack of categorisation has other consequences in terms of the arrangement and description of the material and its indexing. There can be no adequate description without such a typology. To proceed without it is tantamount to describing a conventional record group without distinguishing among correspondence, reports, memoranda, minutes, or other types of records. Even if it is argued that Vansina's typology is inappropriate or inadequate (and none of the respondents opposed it), there still remains the need to make some sorts of distinctions. Over twenty institutions reporting were involved with oral tradition materials, but only eight indicated a full representation of Vansina's typology of oral traditions within their collections, while another seven had more than fifty percent of the categories represented.

10.5 Funding for Oral History and Oral Tradition

It is difficult to isolate oral tradition from oral history with respect to funding patterns among those responding to the survey. As can be seen from the foregoing list of responding institutions, some institutions do oral history without doing oral tradition work, but none that does oral tradition work does not do oral history.

Only a very few institutions receive separate identifiable funding for oral history or oral tradition work. Those that do tend to be linked with or to come under institutions whose primary concern is audiovisual archives or where the programme had special beginnings. Most programmes are funded as part of the larger institutional budgets. This means, of course, in the resultant stiff competition for the allocation of resources, it is not surprising to see oral programmes relegated to the background, with the bulk of funding being allocated to traditional archival functions and tasks. Indeed, the budget allocation to oral history and oral tradition work was for the majority of institutions less than one percent of the total institutional budget. As may be expected, most of the respondents felt that the budget allocations were insufficient. Only eight institutions had adequately funded programmes. It was also hardly susprising that most respondents did not feel that the oral history and oral tradition programmes had used up resources that should have been directed to other and more important archival activities. There was, after all, so little allocated to the programmes in the first place. Needless to say, however, some of the oral history and oral tradition activities have had to be shelved because of budgetary constraints.

Much of the funding for those institutions responding comes from government. University programmes derive their support from the parent institution, and apparently fare better than those

linked to archival institutions. There was very limited funding from donor agencies or other sources reported.

The listing of budget priorities produced a wide variety of answers. There is clearly no agreement among archivists whether recording is more important than preservation or whether equipment merits a higher budget priority than salaries. All that can be concluded is that priorities include salaries, recording, equipment, preservation, transcription, compilation of finding aids, publications, duplication onto storage quality tape, and systematic ongoing slow rewinding.

10.6 Personnel

Inadequate budget allocations impact directly on manpower levels. Only eight institutions were able to report a permanent full-time staff of five people or more. Of these, six institutions had from five to nine people devoted to oral sources work, while two appeared much more heavily staffed: the Archives and Oral History Department of Singapore with eighteen and the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society with fifteen. Many programmes had only one or two people devoted primarily to this activity, and even so, in most cases they reported having additional duties unrelated to oral sources work. It appears that a number of the programmes are staffed by temporary, supernumerary, or occasional staff. The Oral History Office at Columbia University, for instance, has a part-time complement of between forty and fifty people. It was also interesting to note the high manpower levels deployed to recording in comparison to other tasks of transcribing, translating (where necessary), compiling finding aids, and abstracting. This suggests an emphasis or priority on collecting despite the earlier unwillingness to show this as a budgetary priority.

10.7 Equipment

The equipment available to any institution depends on a number of factors, among which is the availability of funds for purchase and the brands of equipment that can be secured on the market. There are not as many varieties of audio equipment as one would suppose, and certain brand names seem to have established themselves throughout the world. These include Revox, Sony, Sanyo, Bell and Howell, Hitachi, Uher, Tandberg, and National Panasonic. Most oral source collectors are looking for equipment that is reliable, portable, durable, easy to operate, and which has good sound fidelity in both recording and playback modes.

A rather distressing picture emerges, however, when consideration is made of the extent to which these institutions are equipped. While the portable tape recorder that is exclusively battery or mains is less common than the type that has the capability for both mains and battery, a great many of the programmes have to

do with scanty equipment. Indeed, some respondents indicated that they had to use their own personal tape recorders for the programme work. Technological advances that would have facilitated the handling of oral sources seem to have largely by-passed the world of oral history and oral tradition. Only nine institutions had electronic typewriters, seventeen had transcribing machines, and only twelve had word processors.

The problems experienced with the equipment related mostly to repairs and the availability of spare parts. As particular models go out of fashion or out of production, it becomes increasingly difficult to secure replacement parts.

10.8 Preservation and Conservation

Whether the archivist is engaged in the recording of oral sources or whether he merely accessions material created or collected by others, he has a duty to make suitable arrangements for the preservation of this material. The majority of institutions involved in this work preserve the material in audio recording form, even if transcripts have also been produced. There is a difference in recording preference between those who use cassette recorders and those who use reel-to-reel (open reel) equipment. Most regard the reel-to-reel recording as producing the more durable copy, with cassettes being kept as the reference copies. Only a few institutions still wipe (erase) the cassette copy for later re-use. The ideal which some institutions have achieved is the retention of three copies of the material: a master reel-to-reel copy, often housed in a separate institution; a working reel-to-reel copy for further reproductions; and a cassette copy for use by researchers and members of the public.

For those who use cassettes in recording, the preference is for C60 or C90 (thirty minutes per side or track and forty-five minutes per side or track, respectively). The C120 is seen as too thin and susceptible to breakage and print-through, and only one institution indicated a preference for it. While some see the C60 as the thicker and more durable of the cassette tapes, less likely to show print-through, others criticised it for being too short and therefore leading to excessively frequent interruptions during recording, and a greater number of tapes requiring storage.

The longer term welfare of the audio recordings has not been resolved at all satisfactorily. Too many institutions still store the tapes in areas that are not environmentally controlled, and only a handful of them have any maintenance programmes. A tiny minority, usually in institutions specialising in audio-visual archives, have meaningful inspection and maintenance programmes, often rewinding tapes once every year, and doing so at ordinary playback speed. There are those who, conscious of this need, find it difficult to meet the archival requirements because

of staff shortages and other commitments. Some rewind the tapes once every seven or ten years, while still others have to perform this minimum requirement using fast-wind machines. (The Indiana University Archive of Traditional Music reported discovering that most print-through occurs on tapes that have been rewound on fast-wind machines.)

It is encouraging to note that very few institutions have had any of their tapes accidentally erased. At the Radio New Zealand Sound Archives, perhaps only two tapes have suffered this fate in over thirty years. Some erasures reported were, fortunately, only in reference copies. Even so, it is advisable to adopt a precaution similar to that taken by the National Film Television and Sound Archives Division of the Public Archives of Canada. Tape recorders used by researchers have the record function locked so that it is inoperable, and a key is required to unlock it and place the machine in the record mode. In some machines the recording head can be removed entirely, thus assuring that no inadvertant erasure occurs. This, of course, means that the machine cannot be used to record should that be needed. The Imperial War Museum in London stores its tape in a "tails out" position as a modest preservation measure. Those that rewind regularly often reverse the tapes (heads-in/tails-out to tails-in/heads out) with each rewinding since the pressure on tape and the greatest possibility of print-through is mainly at the centre, near the reel core, even with smooth winding. For this reason, many programmes store the tape boxes on their flat sides instead of in the more familiar upright position, arguing that this produces a more even weight distribution on the tape itself.

10.9 Access

Access to oral history and oral tradition collections seems generally similar to that for other archival collections. Thirty-one respondents affirmed this, while eight said they had different access regulations for oral material. The main proviso, however, is that whatever the existing regulations, oral history and oral tradition materials are made available subject to the expressed wishes of the donors or interviewees, and strict control is placed on publication. It is stressed that such authorization should be sought at the time of interviewing or recording. With oral tradition, it is often assumed that agreement to recite and perform a tradition is itself indicative of a willingness to publicise the tradition. This is not uniformly or always the case, however, and it is probably an assumption grown out of the recording of oral traditions of predominantly illiterate societies which lacked experience in the benefits and intricacies of copyright. Problems experienced with copyright reported in the survey related to the passing of copyright ownership to next of kin, and to a failure on the part of interviewers/collectors to obtain copyright permission at the appropriate time.

Because institutions dealing especially with oral history lay heavy emphasis on ascertaining the wishes of the donor or interviewee, it seems relatively easy to extend this consideration to issues of privacy. Most institutions reporting indicated no problems in this regard. The right to freedom of information exists in only a limited number of countries. Even in these countries, however, there have not been any significant cases where this has yet been a problem. Most oral history and oral tradition collections would, in any case, be subject to different regulations compared to records created by a government.

Access to collections implies providing the tools required for access. It is not only important that internal repository aids be in existence, for they serve only those who venture into the institution, but also that the existence of the collections should be made known to a larger cross-section of the population and to the wider world. Published guides are important in this regard. But, this aspect has not received the attention it merits, and only sixteen institutions had satisfied this need in one way or another. Consideration must be given to other forms of publication, especially in these days when technology has made it easy to publish easily updatable guides, either through a computer or in microform editions.

The picture that emerges with respect to research use and public benefit from the collection of oral sources, at least from this survey, is rather disappointing. For the majority of institutions reporting, oral source use represented less than one percent of the total research activity at the institutions. Fewer than six respondents showed use levels over ten percent. The keeping of such statistics seems to be sporadic, and that is unfortunate, for undoubtedly much use of oral source material goes unrecorded and unreported, and with increased use should come strong arguments and opportunities for improvement in resource support. Increased use statistics would also help to demonstrate the value and validity of oral source material as a legitimate part of historical research.

10.10 General Analysis of the Responses

Forty-seven institutions indicated involvement with oral history and oral traditions materials. The responses amenable to a yes/no pattern have been tabulated below. There are some discrepancies since some institutions did not respond to some of the questions. The questions shown here follow closely the wording on the original questionnaire, but they are not exhaustive of the questionnaire as the latter was much more extensive, and many of its questions asked for explanations or additional information not suitable for tabulation.

Question	Responses Yes	No
Does your institution draw a distinction between oral history and oral tradition?	33	14
Do you agree with a broad definition of oral history as the oral recollections that are within a person's living memory and oral traditions as those recollections of the past within a given culture that have been orally transmitted through the ages and are at least three generations old?	30	2
Do you record oral interviews?	33	7
Do you transcribe tapes?	25	7
Do you translate tapes into a second or third language?	15	16
Do you preserve audio cassettes?	33	8
Do you preserve reel-to-reel tapes?	29	7
Do you compile finding aids for oral history and oral tradition?	30	6
Do you accession oral material generated by other institutions/individuals?	33	6
Do you see oral work as a legitimate function of an archival institution?	44	3
Do you accept the view that only the accessioning, preservation, and dissemination of oral material generated by others should be undertaken by archivists, and that they should not be involved in the actual recording of interviews?	17	31
Do you view oral tradition as a cultural resource?	32	5
Do you view oral tradition as a historical resource?	33	1
Do oral traditions have any value in societies with a written tradition?	37	3
Do oral traditions have any value in societies without a written tradition?	35	1
Do you agree with the Vansina typology of oral traditions?	16	0

Question	Responses Yes	No
In your oral tradition collections, do you have any of the following types of oral traditions as defined by Vansina?		
Titles (formulae):	10	--
Slogans (formulae):	9	--
Didactic Formulae:	9	--
Ritual Formulae:	11	--
Historical Poetry:	11	--
Panegyric Poetry:	11	--
Religious Poetry:	9	--
Personal Poetry:	10	--
Place Name Lists:	11	--
General Tales:	16	--
Local Tales:	16	--
Family Tales:	18	--
Aetiological Myths:	9	--
Artistic Tales:	9	--
Personal Memories:	20	--
Precedents (commentaries):	8	--
Occasional Comments:	15	--
Is your budget for oral history and oral tradition separate from that of the mother institution?	3	33
Is the programme budget allocation sufficient?	8	26
Do you feel that your oral history and oral tradition programme has used up resources that should have been directed at other and more important archival activities?	5	27
Do you have any permanent staff doing oral history and oral tradition work?	22	--
Do you have any of the following equipment for the oral history/oral tradition programme?		
Portable Tape Recorder - Battery Only:	13	--
- Mains Only:	13	--
- Mains/Battery:	29	--
Typewriter - manual:	20	--
- electric:	20	--
- electronic:	9	--
Transcribing Machine:	17	--
Word Processor:	12	--

Question	Responses Yes	No
Do you have problems in servicing equipment?	10	27
Do you have problems in obtaining spare parts?	9	25
Do you rewind and retension the preservation tapes regularly?	15	18
When rewinding preservation reel-to-reel tapes do you use fast rewind?	9	9
When rewinding preservation reel-to-reel tapes do you rewind at normal speed?	11	7
Have any of your tapes ever been erased accidentally?	4	35
Are your regulations for using oral history and oral tradition material different from those for other collections?	8	30
Have you ever had any problems with copyright?	6	35
Have you ever had any problems with the protection of privacy?	7	34
Do you have any published guides to your oral history or oral tradition collections?	6	26

[Note: One omission from the questionnaire that might have been helpful was information on volume of holdings.]

Sincere gratitude is expressed to all colleagues, world-wide, who responded to the questionnaire and made this study possible. It is hoped that the data gleaned will help archivists dealing with oral source materials.

11.0 GUIDELINES FOR ORAL HISTORY

In concern for the integrity of the practice of oral history, and mindful of its responsibilities in that regard, the Oral History Association of the United States of America, after much thought and deliberation, developed two sets of guidelines that may prove helpful to others working in oral history. These guidelines are offered in this study as examples of criteria that can be developed to encourage collectors and administrators to improve the quality and reliability of the oral sources and their administration, and thereby make them more valuable to the writing of history. They are not offered as absolutes designed to fit every situation, and each archivist must make appropriate adjustments to his own situation.

The first set of guidelines very broadly establishes areas of concern and values for those broad areas. The second set of guidelines is more detailed and precise and was designed for comprehensive and thorough analysis, appraisal, and evaluation of oral history programmes, projects, and products.

11.1 Goals and Guidelines of the Oral History Association[1]

The Oral History Association recognizes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information in spoken form and encourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights, and obligations for the creation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable.

Guidelines for the Interviewee

The interviewee should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project to which contribution is being made. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and in recognition of the costs and effort involved, the interviewee should strive to impart candid information of lasting value. The interviewee should be aware of the mutual rights involved in oral history, such as editing and seal privileges, literary rights, prior use, fiduciary relationships, royalties, and determination of the disposition of all forms of the record and extent of dissemination and use. Preferences of the person interviewed and any prior agreements should govern the conduct of the oral history process, and these preferences and agreements should be carefully documented for the record.

Guidelines for the interviewer

Interviewers should guard against possible social injury to or exploitation of interviewees and should conduct interviews with respect for human dignity. Each interviewee

1/ Adopted November 1968, with minor revisions through subsequent amendments. Copied here with permission of the Oral History Association (U.S.A.).

should be selected on the basis of demonstrable potential for imparting information of lasting value. The interviewer should strive to prompt informative dialogue through challenging and perceptive inquiry, should be grounded in the background and experiences of the person being interviewed, and, if possible, should review the sources related to the interviewee before conducting the interview. Interviewers should extend the inquiry beyond their immediate needs to make each interview as complete as possible for the benefit of others, and should, whenever possible, place the material in a depository where it will be available for general research. The interviewer should inform the interviewee of the planned conduct of the oral history process and develop mutual expectations of rights connected thereto, including editing, mutual seal privileges, literary rights, prior use, fiduciary relationships, royalties, rights to determine the disposition of all forms of the record, and the extent of dissemination and use. Interviews should be conducted in a spirit of objectivity, candor, and integrity, and in keeping with common understandings, purposes, and stipulations mutually arrived at by all parties. The interviewer shall not violate and will protect the seal on any information considered confidential by the interviewee, whether imparted on tape as part of the interview or conveyed separately from the interview.

Guidelines for Sponsoring Institutions

Subject to conditions prescribed by interviewees, it is an obligation of sponsoring institutions (or individual collectors) to prepare and preserve easily useable records; to keep careful records of all creation and processing of each interview; to identify, index, and catalogue all interviews; and, when open to research, to make their existence known. Interviewers should be selected on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill. Interviewers should be carefully matched to interviewees. Institutions should keep both interviewees and interviewers aware of the importance of the above guidelines for the successful production and use of oral history sources.

11.2 Oral History Evaluation Guidelines[1]

The Oral history Association, in furtherance of its goals and guidelines and in support of its evaluation service, has developed guidelines for the use of those called upon to evaluate existing or proposed programmes and projects./2 The

1/ Adopted October 1979. Copied here with permission of the Oral History Association (U.S.A.).

2/ "Project" is here defined as a series of interviews or a single interview focused on a particular subject, theme, or era. "Programme" is defined as a set of projects under one management.

outline may also be used by individuals to test their own procedures and by funding agencies to appraise proposals.

Recognizing that the ultimate measure of oral history lies in its reliability as a source for historical understanding, the Association submits that conscientious consideration of every step in its creation is a professional obligation, and that careful attention to the factors raised in the following outline substantially increases the probability of enduring value.

Therefore, the Association has developed the following guidelines to be used in the evaluation of programmes and projects producing oral history sources and to provide standards for new and established programmes. The text is intended to suggest lines of inquiry by evaluators, who should, however, recognize the need for flexibility in applying them to specific projects. The guidelines will be subject to continuing review by the Oral History Association.

Programme/Project Guidelines

Purposes and Objectives

Are the purposes clearly set forth? How realistic are they?

What factors demonstrate a significant need for this project?

What is the research design? How clear and realistic is it?

Are the terms, conditions, and objectives of funding clearly made known to allow the user of the interviews to judge the potential effect of such funding on the scholarly integrity of the project? Is the allocation of funds adequate to allow the project goals to be accomplished?

How do institutional relationships affect the purposes and objectives?

Selection of Interviewers and Interviewees

In what way are the interviewers and interviewees appropriate (or inappropriate) to the purposes and objectives?

What are the significant omissions, and why were they omitted?

Records and Provenance

What are the policies and provisions for maintaining a record of provenance of interviews? Are they adequate? What can be done to improve them?

How are records, policies, and procedures made known to interviewers, interviewees, staff, and users?

How does the system of records enhance the usefulness of the interviews and safeguard the rights of those involved?

Availability of Materials

How accurate and specific is the publicising of the interviews?

How is information about interviews directed to likely users?

How have the interviews been used?

Finding Aids

What is the overall design for finding aids?

Are the finding aids adequate and appropriate?

How available are the finding aids to users?

Management, Qualifications, and Training

How effective is the management of the programme/project?

What provisions are there for supervision and staff review?

What are the qualifications for staff positions?

What are the provisions for systematic and effective training?

What improvements could be made in the management of the programme/project?

Ethical/Legal Guidelines

What policies and procedures assure that each interviewee is made fully aware of:

- his/her rights and interests?
- the purposes of the programme/project?
- the various stages of the interviewing and transcribing process and his/her responsibilities in that process?
- the eventual deposit of the interview(s) in a suitable repository?
- the possible uses to which the material may be put?

What policies and procedures assure that each interviewer is fully aware of:

- his/her rights and interests?
- his/her ethical and legal responsibilities to the interviewee?
- his/her ethical and legal responsibilities to the programme/project?

How does the programme/project secure a release from the interviewer?

What policies and procedures assure that for each interviewee an adequate deed of gift or formal contract transfers rights, title, and interest in both tape(s) and transcript(s) to an administering authority?

In lieu of a deed of gift or contract, what other evidence of intent does the programme/project rely on? Is it legally adequate?

How does the programme/project reflect responsible adherence to ethical and legal standards? Specifically:

- How has the staff been impressed with the need for confidentiality of the interview content until the the time of release?
- How has the staff been impressed with the need to conduct interviews in a spirit of mutual respect and with consideration for the interests of the interviewees?
- How does the programme/project demonstrate its ability to carry out the provisions of legal agreements and to protect the tape(s) and transcript(s) from unethical use?
- What steps are taken to assure that the staff recognises its responsibilities to gather accurate material, to process it as quickly as possible, and to make it available for use to the widest possible audience?

Tape/Transcript Guidelines

Information About the Participants

Are the names of both interviewer and interviewee clearly indicated on the tape/abstract/transcript and in catalogue materials?

Is there adequate biographical information about both interviewer and interviewee? Where can these be found?

Interview Information

Are the tapes, transcripts, time indices, abstracts, and other material presented for use identified as to the programme/project of which they are a part?

Are the date and place of interview indicated on tape, transcript, time index, abstract, and in appropriate catalogue material?

Are there interviewer's statements about the preparation for or circumstances of the interview(s)? Where? Are they generally available to researchers? How are the rights of the interviewees protected against the improper use of such commentaries?

Are there records of contracts between the programme and the interviewee? How detailed are they? Are they available to researchers? If so, with what safeguards for individual rights and privacy?

Interview Tape Information

Is the complete master tape preserved? Are there one or more duplicate copies?

If the original or any duplicate has been edited, rearranged, cut, or spliced in any way, is there a record of that action, including by whom and for what purposes the action was taken?

Do the tape label and appropriate catalogue materials show the recording speed, level, and length of the interview?

Has the programme/project used recording equipment and tapes which are appropriate to the purposes of the work and use of the material? Are the recordings of good quality? How could they be improved?

In the absence of transcripts, are there suitable finding aids to give users access to information on tapes? What form do they take? Is there a record of who prepares these finding aids?

Are researchers permitted to listen to tapes? Are there any restrictions on the use of tapes?

Interview Transcript Information

Is the transcript an accurate record of the tape? Is a careful record kept of each step of processing the transcript, including who transcribed, audited, edited, retyped, and proofread the transcript in final copy?

Are the nature and extent of changes in the transcript from the original tape made known to the user?

What finding aids have been prepared for the transcript? Are they suitable and adequate? How could they be improved?

Are there any restrictions on access to or use of the transcripts? Are they clearly noted?

Are there any photo materials or other supporting documents for the interview? Do they enhance and supplement the text?

Interview Content Guidelines

Does the content of each interview and the cumulative content of the whole collection contribute to accomplishing the objectives of the programme/project?

In what particulars do the interview and/or collection appear to succeed or fall short?

In what way does the programme/project contribute to historical understanding?

In what particulars does each interview or the whole collection succeed or fall short of such contribution?

To what extent does the material add fresh information, fill gaps in the existing record, and/or provide fresh insights and perspectives?

To what extent is the information reliable and valid? Is it eye-witness or hearsay testimony? How well and in what manner does it meet internal and external tests of corroboration, consistency, and explication of contradications?

What is the relationship of the interview information to existing documentation and historiography?

How does the texture of the interview impart detail, richness, and flavor to the historical record?

What is the basic nature of the information contributed? Is it facts, perceptions, interpretations, judgments, or attitudes, and how does each contribute to understanding?

Are the scope and volume, and where appropriate the representativeness of the population interviewed, appropriate and sufficient to the purpose? Is there enough testimony to validate the evidence without passing the point of diminishing returns? How appropriate is the quantity to the purpose of the study? Is there a good representative sample of the population represented in the interviews?

How do the form and structure of the interviews contribute to make the content information understandable?

Interview Conduct Guidelines

Use of Other Sources

Is the oral history technique the best means of acquiring the information? If not, what other sources exist? Has the interviewer used them, and has he/she sought to preserve them if necessary?

Has the interviewer made an effort to consult other relevant oral histories?

Is the interview technique of value in supplementing existing sources?

Historical Contribution

Does the interviewer pursue the inquiry with historical integrity?

Do other purposes being served by the interview enrich or diminish quality?

What does the interview contribute to the larger context of historical knowledge and understanding?

Interviewer Preparation

Is the interviewer well-informed about the subjects under discussion?

Are the primary and secondary sources used in preparation for the interview adequate?

Interviewee Selection and Orientation

Does the interviewee seem appropriate to the subjects discussed?

Does the interviewee understand and respond to the interview purposes?

Has the interviewee prepared for the interview and assisted in the process?

Interviewer-Interviewee Relations

Do interviewer and interviewee motivate each other toward interview objectives?

Is there a balance of empathy and analytical judgment in the interview?

Adaptive Skills

In what ways does the interview show that the interviewer has used skills appropriate to:

- the interviewee's condition (health, memory, mental alertness, ability to communicate, time schedule, etc.)?
- the interview conditions (disruptions and interruptions, equipment problems, extraneous participants, etc.)?

Technique

What evidence is there that the interviewer has:

- thoroughly explored pertinent lines of thought?
- followed up significant clues?
- made an effort to identify sources of information?
- employed critical challenge where needed?

Perspective

Do the biases of the interviewer interfere with or influence the responses of the interviewee?

What information is available that may inform users of any prior or separate relationship of the interviewer to the interviewee?

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